Abstract

REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN CHARACTERS IN

STEPHENIE MEYER'S *TWILIGHT* SAGA

by

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This thesis looks at Native American portrayals in the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer. How the Quileute people are portrayed in the series affects readers' perception of the real Quileute tribe. I argue that while certainly not flawless, Meyer creates complex Native American characters that may have been too easily dismissed by critics because the series contains other issues such as the representation of young women and religious themes that have gained more critical attention. Looking at how Native Americans have been stereotyped in past mainstream literature, I argue that the series is dynamic enough to offer readers a deeper understanding of Meyer's Quileute characters. Such topics explored include the strength and balance of the Quileute people's relationships, how quality family life is on the reservation, and will even explain ways in which the series avoids making the Quileute wolves into animalistic savages. These ideas are also compared to the portrayals of the vampires in the series as well as the role they play in regards to the Quileute/vampire treaty which states that the Quileute will allow the Cullen's their secret identity as vampires if they never bite another human being. I also argue that when compared to criteria for judging multicultural quality concerning literature containing Native American characters, the *Twilight* series is actually fairly positive and unbiased in regards to the Quileute people. The thesis demonstrates the importance of the series; it holds amazing

potential when it comes to making young adult readers aware of the current struggles faced by Native American peoples within the United States.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: *TWILIGHT* BEGINNINGS

Not since *Harry Potter* has such a media sensation affected teenagers everywhere until the first novel of an unknown Stephenie Meyer hit the shelves in 2005. Copies of *Twilight* started selling across the globe and soon Hollywood noticed. It wasn't long before Meyer released a second installment and Hollywood began creating a screenplay. This series is of course, *Twilight*, and the impact it has had on young adult literature cannot be ignored. In his book on the series, *Spotlight: A Close-Up Look at the Artistry and Meaning of Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Saga*, John Granger confirms that as of 2010, "Mrs. Meyer's *Twilight* novels have sold more than 70 million copies to date and will sell probably twice that before the movies are all released " (i). Even though the series has been so popular, few critics have really tackled the book. In large part, critics suggest because the books are targeted to young people, they are relatively new, and they were written by a stay-at-home mom (Granger iii). Perhaps one of the most interesting untapped areas of study in the series is the portrayal of the Quileute people, who play a major role as the tribe that turns out a group of young boys and girls who transform into wolves to protect the tribe from vampires. But before this thesis can begin to critically look at those portrayals, it is important to look at the success and impact of the series. This introduction looks into *Twilight*'s beginnings, provides a preface to the characters and series, and examines the effects the books have had on young adult literature and the culture of adolescents in general. It also explores the impact the series has had on the state of Washington and the Quileute Nation, along with the critical work that has been published on the series and especially the Native American characters. Lastly, it provides a brief history of Native American stereotypes within mainstream literature, and what this could mean in the context of the Quileute and the *Twilight* series.

Stephenie Meyer has been dismissed by some critics simply because she never studied writing and never dreamed of becoming a best-selling author. Meyer, who had never done any formal writing, awoke one evening after having an unusual dream of two young lovers, one a vampire, embracing “in a beautiful meadow surrounded by forest,” she explains in an interview (Blasingame 631). She immediately wrote down what she could remember of the dream. To her surprise, she was instantly curious as to who the people were and what their story was. After some character and plot development, she realized she needed to choose the location of the meadow and forest. She did an internet search to scout out the perfect location for the story. She had to find somewhere that was rainy most of the time so that the vampire in the story could avoid sunlight. This is how she located Forks, Washington, according to Susan Carpenter in the newspaper article “‘Twilight' Fans Turn a Spotlight on One-time Timber Town Forks." It was a perfect surprise to Meyer that Forks was surrounded by woods, lush greenery, and had a local reservation with a folklore containing wolves. An idea dawned upon Meyer that Native Americans who transform into wolves would make a perfect vampire enemy and one in particular would provide a key player in a love triangle. Meyer started writing non-stop and completed the novel in an amazing three months (Meyer, “Bio”). *Twilight*, the first book in the series, introduces the reader to Bella Swan and Edward Cullen, the two characters that appeared in Meyer’s dream meadow. Edward is a vampire that thirsts for Bella’s blood more than anyone else’s on Earth, and even though he only drinks blood from animals, he is very tempted to kill her. Ironically, he also falls in love with her. The only person that seems to sense how dangerous this romance could be is Billy Black, the father of Bella’s childhood friend and the best friend of Bella’s father. Billy lives on the Quileute reservation with his son, Jacob, Bella’s friend from youth. After Edward leaves Bella in *New Moon* to protect her from himself, the Quileute wolf

pack is introduced the relationship between Bella and Jacob begins. *Eclipse* centers on the conflict of a love triangle between Bella, Jacob, and Edward that results after Edward's return. And in the final book of the series, *Breaking Dawn*, Bella marries Edward, delivers his child, and becomes a vampire herself.

So why is the series so popular? In her critical essay, "Charmed," Megan Irwin says it's really the characters that fans have fallen in love with (22). In the documentary, *Destination Forks*, one such fan describes getting "Team Edward" (which will be explained later on in the thesis) tattooed on her back as well as naming her son and daughter after two characters in the book. The three main characters are all very different, but perhaps easy for teenagers to relate to. Bella is a clumsy, shy teenage girl who doesn't really fit in because of her social awkwardness. Edward is a controlling, intelligent 109 year-old vampire who maintains old-fashioned views of romance and chastity. And Jacob is a teenage werewolf who is laid back and provides much comic relief with his witty sense of humor. Meyer herself says her characters rule the story. She adds, "I'm really kind of obsessive about my characters; they are the essence of the book for me, and everything that happens springs from who they are" (Blasingame 631). Thus, when it comes to the *Twilight* series, character portrayals are extremely important to both Meyer and her readers. Not only is this series a bestseller all around the world, but Hollywood loved the characters so much that it has capitalized on the series as well by turning the books into major motion pictures. All four books will see the big screen, and the first three movies have already seen international success. All three movies combined have pulled in over a billion dollars in sales (**"**Box Office History for Twilight Movies**"**). Of course, increased ticket sales have only further boosted book sales, making Meyer a well-known name. Irwin says, "Though J.K. Rowling is still the best-known young adult writer in the world, Meyer is closing in on the title"

(18). Thus, *Harry Potter* may soon take a backseat to *Twilight* as far as popularity among young readers is concerned.

Like *Harry Potter*, Meyer's series has certainly had an effect on young adult literature. Many teachers might argue that anything that gets teens out from in front of the T.V. and reading has positive attributes. Lenzi Hart, an eighth grade teacher who has recently invested in a class set of *Twilight* books, says in the online article "Opening Doors for Reluctant Readers: 'Twilight' by Stephenie Meyer," "Never before have I seen teenagers so enamored and excited about a book series, and it's not just my girl students." She adds that the series "is engaging my students that are usually not avid readers" (Hart). Many other teachers and librarians have seen the same phenomenon. Thus, for some, the series has offered a positive way for young readers to get excited about reading. But for others, the series has encouraged a teenage gothic genre of literature that has pushed readers further away from classical literature. Ty Spencer Hoppe, a frequent online blogger, recently wrote about a trip to Books-A-Million and the disappointment he found there when he noticed that over 60% of the titles in the teen section were related to vampires, wolves, or gothic romance. This, he adds, is the result of Meyer's success – a world of constant knock-off production, rather than the creation of new literature for young readers. The content of *Twilight* was a major source of debate at a recent conference on young adult literature at Cambridge University in England. One presenter and professor of young adult literature, Maria Nikolajeva, was very concerned because she believes the series teaches "conservative values that do not in any way endorse independent thinking or personal development or a woman's position as an independent creature" (Moskowitz). Kate McGregor agrees that the weak character of Bella is the main downfall of the series. She says that as a librarian, she has seen the series do amazing things for reluctant readers. However, it is the female lead that offers the most

danger to young readers. The conference also aimed to discuss how these novels with darker themes and undertones might affect young readers (Moskowitz). Certainly the *Twilight* series is a bit of a depressant. It deals with young death, murder, violence, sex, and many other dark and dangerous ideas. Regardless of whether critics see Meyer's series as positive or negative, the fact that these debates are ongoing is evidence that the series has left its mark on young adult literature. And as the winner of several awards and book sales reaching in the millions, Meyer's success in the genre cannot be debated.

Not only has this series affected young adult fiction, but *Twilight* has also had a huge impact on popular culture as a whole. As Sara Hohenberger notices, "These days, *Twilight* is everywhere. From books to movies to memorabilia, you can't go into many stores without coming across something *Twilight*." Indeed, *Twilight* does seem to be everywhere. Even Burger King got in on the craze when they packaged all their kids' meals in *Eclipse* packaging. Those that read and re-read the series over and over describe themselves as "Twiholic[s]" because they see themselves as literally being addicted to it, according to the documentary *Twilight in Forks*. Another result of this craze within society is the now numerous Fandoms. These groups of "Twihards" or "Twilighters" devote much of their lives to networking with other devoted fans. Even adults with full-time jobs have quit their professions to become members of devoted fandoms like the group "*Twilight* Moms" (*Destination Forks*). The documentary, *Twilight in Forks*, looks at some of these groups. It says many fan-based sites have followers by the hundred thousands, including adults and men. Fans are so devoted to the cause that they have drawn clear lines labeled "Team Jacob" and '"Team Edward." The merchandising for these two groups is overwhelming. Everything from tee shirts to underwear can be bought branding a team choice. A recent spoof called *Vampires Suck* mocks the two groups in an epic battle scene that has young

girls dressed in either Team Edward or Team Jacob tee shirts. The fans fight in a mock battle that is filled with the graphic violence of young girls beating each other in the head with shovels while chanting the name of their "team." The dividing into teams has caused many observers to raise eyebrows. In his online article, "Twilight Eclipse Part II: A Pop Culture Phenomenon, and Edward's Superhuman Secret," Jeremy Clyman says, "Many a movie presents a love triangle central to the plot, but with the Twilight Saga a rare tipping has been reached in which reality intrudes and loyalties/opposition spills into the public forum." Bumper stickers, tee shirts, book bags, pillow cases, and many other items are now sold boasting for either Team Edward or Team Jacob. And there is no end in sight. The last movie has been broken up into two parts, meaning two more years of sold-out theater tickets and midnight DVD release parties. There are also the rumors that Meyer will publish her now unfinished manuscript of *Midnight Sun*, which is *Twilight* told from Edward's point-of-view instead of Bella's. *Twilight* has caused a media sensation and as of right now, it looks like this is one area of mainstream culture that will continue to be popular!

Because of that popularity, the *Twilight* series has taken Forks, Washington, by surprise. Forks is a small fishing community that was relatively unknown before Meyer's publications. In her article "The Twilight Zone," Candice Vallantin confirms this: "For years, visitors beyond the outdoorsy type were scarce – until Stephenie Meyer rolled into town." And now the Chamber of Commerce says that it is never surprising to see 350 to 450 people a day come in looking for information about *Twilight* tours (*Twilight in Forks*). Many people in the community are trying to capitalize on Forks' newfound fame. Rianilee Belles, a "Twihard" or "Twilighter" from South Africa, decided to move to Forks solely based on Meyer's descriptions of the area in the books. She and her husband now own a *Twilight* store that specializes in memorabilia from the books

and films (*Destination Forks*). These are certainly not the only people trying to get their piece of the *Twilight* pie. The couple that lives in the house that was used as Bella's in the movies has put a sign in the front yard that reads, "Home of the Swans." They have also painted the interior to match the descriptions supplied by Meyer in the first novel (*Destination Forks*). Another such couple has decided that the house they live in is the house that motivated Meyer's descriptions of the Cullens' house. It is now a bed and breakfast that sees three to four hundred people a day pass through for pictures during the summer months. And it is almost always booked up, allowing visitors to determine which character's room they are staying in (*Destination Forks*). And if this is not enough, Forks decided to establish an official Stephenie Meyer day! The day is on September 13, Bella's birthday. In *Bedazzled: A Book About Stephenie Meyer and the Twilight Phenomenon*, George Beahm writes, "Up to 1,500 people showed up to celebrate Stephenie Meyer Day in 2009" (107). All this activity has boomed local businesses and it seems no one is really complaining in a time of such economic decline.

Forks is not the only place that has benefited from the series; close to Forks, on La Push Beach, is another community that has been just as affected by the *Twilight* craze – the Quileute Reservation. Judith Leggatt and Kristin Burnett say in their essay, "Biting Bella – Treaty Negotiation, Quileute History, and Why 'Team Jacob' is Doomed to Lose," "The Quileute people figure prominently in Meyer's story" (26). For perhaps the first time ever, large numbers of young readers are now uniting in their love and support of Native American characters, which makes the portrayal of them all the more important. Fans who visit Forks each year are just as excited to see the side of town that represents Team Jacob. They notice that as soon as they get close to the reservation, there is a sign that has clearly marked the "Treaty Line." It also says, "No vampires beyond this point" (*Destination Forks*). While this is obviously meant as bit of a

joke for the tourists, critics have been concerned about how this story affects the real Quileute people. However, it seems that the new popularity has left most tribal members feeling positive. Tribal chairwoman Anna Rose Counsell-Gyer calls the newfound interest in their tribe "a good surprise" (Valdes). She adds that this opportunity and the resulting tourism allows the tribe to teach fans their authentic legends and stories (Valdes). Many tribal members have even adopted Jacob and the wolf pack by displaying Team Jacob signs around the reservation. One woman lives in a house that she is sure Jacob's looked like. She has painted the outside to resemble Meyer's descriptions so that fans can pretend they are getting their pictures made right in front of the official Black residence (*Destination Forks*). Valdes confirms that "At their Oceanside Resort, the tribe is opening a cabin decorated in a wolf theme – a shout out to Jacob and the Quileute's own origin story, which begins with transformation from wolves to people." Thus, overall the Quileutes seem to be taking a fairly positive stance on the issue of their lead role in the *Twilight* series. Not only is the tribe seeing tourist money come through, but they now have the stage on which to tell the listening world the real legends, stories, and histories that they have cherished for so long.

Even though this series has turned a small, unknown town into a vacation mecca for young teens, there is still a relatively small amount of serious criticism published on the series, and even less on the Quileute characters. There are several books published dedicated to the success of *Twilight*. Two such works are George Beahm's *Bedazzled: A Book About Stephenie Meyer and the Twilight Phenomenon* and John Granger's *Spotlight: A Close-Up Look at the Artistry and Meaning of Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Saga* (2010). While there are numerous published works on the characterization of Bella, Edward, and their relationship, there are five important critical essays that really address the portrayals of the Quileute characters in the series.

Sara Worley's essay "Love and Authority Among Wolves," examines free will in the series and whether or not the wolves actually have any. Mainly, Worley looks at Meyer's notion of imprinting and the role of the wolf Alpha versus the thirst the Cullens and other vampires are ruled by. However, the vampires can choose how they live, whereas according to Worley, the wolves are more governed by nature. Natalie Wilson's "Civilized Vampires Versus Savage Werewolves: Race and Ethnicity in the *Twilight* Series." Wilson argues that "Edward is constructed as a white, godlike vampire, and the color white is associated with purity, beauty, and heroism. The non-white is rendered inferior, with the Quileute shape-shifting werewolves portrayed as not as good or heroic as the white vampires, and their russet-colored skin, black hair, and dark eyes are associated with violence, danger, and savagery" (56). She argues the series is full of racist stereotypes and that "Jacob alternates from being noble to being savage" (63). Judith Leggatt and Kristin Burnett's essay is more critical of the role of the Cullens in the series. "Biting Bella – Treaty Negotiation, Quileute History, and Why 'Team Jacob' is Doomed to Lose" examines the treaties of the series as well as Quileute history in regards to Meyer's construction. The authors argue that, "Vampires symbolize the many historical and contemporary social and economic problems that arose in Native communities as a result of colonization, and the shape-shifting Quileute try to protect their people from those problems" (Laggatt and Burnett 31). But they also observe that the Quileutes are portrayed as more dangerous than the Cullens, as evidenced by Emily's scars and Jacob's forcing a kiss on Bella. Debbie Reese (Nambé Pueblo), a professor of American Indian Studies, has also written about the series in a blog post entitled, "Meyer's *Twilight*." Like the previously mentioned critics, Reese expresses her disapproval of the series because she believes it to be inauthentic. She has the series labeled as "Not Recommended." While most academic critics seem to condemn the

portrayal of the Quileute characters, two essays by Rebecca Housel praise Jacob and his wolf pack. “The ‘Real’ Danger: Fact Vs. Fiction for the Girl Audience” basically argues that Edward’s relationship with Bella is extremely unhealthy and that Jacob would be the better choice for her because he allows her to be who she wants to be; he doesn’t mentally control her. Housel’s essay “The Tao of Jacob” focuses on how reservation life has made Jacob a natural born leader and responsible person. For Housel living in a tightly knit family and community has turned Jacob into “a pretty cool guy” (244). It seems that the critical work that has been done so far goes from one extreme to another.

Bouncing between extremes is certainly not new in regards to literature by non-Natives featuring Native American characters. In his book, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, Robert Berkhofer comments that “the history of the white images of the Indian leads one to cynicism about the ability of one people to understand another in mutually acceptable terms” (196). One reason for this may be because when it comes to Native American portrayals, one side of the spectrum is the “noble Indian” who is known to be like Tonto in nature – ever willing to serve and help the white man. The “Noble Indian” is also frequently associated with a strong spiritual connection to the earth and natural elements. The other side that dominates literature is the “savage Indian,” who is murderous, animalistic, and incapable of becoming civilized according to the white man’s definition. “Us and Them: Stereotypes of Native Americans and Chicanos in ‘American Fiction’” by Åsebrit Sundquist reviews some of the more negative stereotypes of Native men and women. Sundquist says, “The male characters, are described as cruel, violent, barbarous, debased, treacherous, dirty, superstitious, and ignorant, and as liars, thieves, and drunkards” (22). Sundquist adds that when it comes to “female portrayals, the sexually aggressive and treacherous Sirens are frequent

for Indian . . . women" (22). However, in his book, *Native American Identities: From Stereotype to Archetype in Art and Literature*, Scott B. Vickers reviews the most popular negative and positive stereotypes that have plagued literature featuring Native American characters. He discusses such things as the "good example," the "vanishing human species," the person "permanently consigned to an idealized past," the "animalistic" person, the "exaggerated [or] caricatured" person, and the "child of the devil" (4-5). The stereotypes may seem like different levels of extremes, but in the essay "American Indians in Children's Books," Janet Coulon explains that balancing the noble versus savage is often difficult because if an author is not careful, he/she runs the risk of idealizing the character or turning the character into an exotic other (172). While she doesn't give a solution that all white writers can follow in order to successfully incorporate Native American characters, she does suggest that it's a problem white writers will always face. And Berkhofer agrees with her: "In light of the history of white Indian imagery, it seems certain that the term and the idea of Indian otherness will continue into the future" (196).

As the fourth movie undergoes production, more and more *Twilight* fans pick up the books or the previous movies. And even though there are few critical projects available on the series, it is important to consider many aspects of the novels and how they are perceived by young adult readers. Meyer's series has affected not only the communities in Washington, but popular culture as a whole has been touched by Meyer's story. Because a large portion of the books focus on the Quileute tribe, it is extremely important to look into how those portrayals relate to previous Native American portrayals by non-Native authors. Though there is a lack of formal critical research on the series and even less on the role of the Quileute, this is a series that is not going away overnight. No matter why the critics ignore or shun it, it is time to engage this

work critically, especially when it comes to the Native American portrayals that have found their way onto the hands of millions of teenagers all over the world! The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the Quileute characters in Meyer's novels are a bit more complex than what current criticism has argued. Because there are so many young adults supporting Meyer's portrayals, perhaps a more balanced analysis is needed before critics can cast her off as another white author stereotyping Native American characters. Chapter One, "The Enemy of the "Cold Ones" will break down and provide a detailed analysis of the first books in the series, *Twilight* and *New Moon*, paying special attention to popular stereotypes and how Meyer's characters compare to them. Chapter Two, "Crossing Enemy Lines," will do the same for *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn*, the last two novels of Meyer's saga. Chapter Three, "The Series as Young Adult Literature," will compare the saga to a popular guide for selecting appropriate, positive, and unbiased literature for children and young adults called *How to Tell the Difference: A Guide to Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias* by Beverly Slapin, Doris Seale, and Rosemary Gonzales. Chapter Four will conclude the thesis by looking at the findings within a larger context of Multicultural and Young Adult literature, as well as what that means for popular culture.

CHAPTER 1: THE ENEMY OF THE "COLD ONES"

"Few books are perfect," states a popular guide for evaluating literature for young people for anti-racist Native American texts (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 1). For Native American readers and those that enjoy multicultural texts, the *Twilight* craze raised eyebrows when those readers heard about the Quileute tribe that would star a main role in the series. Could Meyer, a non-native, write about Native characters non-stereotypically? Could she do so authentically? Could she even do so positively? These are typical questions asked of multicultural texts -- questions that become extremely important in literature for young people because of their impressionable youth. And while certainly there are no perfect books, Meyer offers readers a far more complex portrayal of Native American characters than her critics have suggested. In *Native American Identities: From Stereotype to Archetype in Art and Literature,* Scott B. Vickers outlines the five most common positive stereotypes that appear in Native American literature: the noble savage, the harmless child-like race, peoples frozen in the past, a good example of someone that has been civilized, and a "subservient yet honorable character capable of assisting the dominant culture" (4). Vickers also mentions the six most common negative stereotypes: the character "lacks a recognizable psychological reality," is constantly negative, portrayed as "less than human," has exaggerated features, "has no historical or cultural reality," and is "a hostile other" (5). In addition to its traditional romance-genre plot, Meyer's *Twilight* introduces Jacob Black and the Quileute tribe. *New Moon,* the second installment, stars the Quileute reservation and tribe to many young readers. By looking at Jacob, his family, and legends in *Twilight* and Jacob's growth, reservation life, the pack and family, and romances in *New Moon,* I will demonstrate that both these books avoid the simplistic good/bad stereotypes outlined by Vickers; instead, I argue that the first two books offer dynamic and complex Native American characters.

The descriptions of Jacob Black in *Twilight* introduce him to the reader as a normal teenage boy who is a member of the Quileute Nation. *Twilight* opens with its narrator, Bella Swan, arriving in Forks, Washington to live with her father. She has no friends or acquaintances in the small town except for her father and a childhood friend whom she hasn't seen in years, Jacob Black. The first mention of the Black family occurs when Bella discovers that her father bought her a 1984 truck from Jacob's father, Billy (Meyer, *Twilight* 7). The first time Bella actually sees Jacob is when she goes with some school friends to La Push beach, the beach that lies on the reservation Jacob lives on with the other Quileute members. Bella says, "He looked fourteen, maybe fifteen, and had long, glossy black hair pulled back with a rubber band at the nape of his neck. His skin was beautiful, silky and russet-colored; his eyes were dark, set deep above the high planes of his cheekbone. . . . Altogether, a very pretty face" (Meyer, *Twilight* 119). One of the negative stereotypes outlined by Vickers is that the character "has skin color or racial features that are exaggerated, caricatured, or in themselves taken as sufficient to deny him or her human status" (5). In her online blog about the series Debbie Reese has noted that the description of Jacob is "plausible," "realistic," but "predictable" ("Meyer's Twilight"). While that criticism is not necessarily negative, others tend to see the description as a bit more overdone. Reese advertises another popular online blog about the series from a group called "Deadbrownwalking," a group on LiveJournal.com that discusses popular media portrayals of people of color from an inside point-of-view; according to one blogger on this site, that says, "Bella is a dubious narrator when it came to the physical descriptions of Edward and Jacob, but the subtext ran to the Hot!Indian to me" (Micalaux). The "Hot!Indian" being referred to is a stereotype that has been imprinted on the cover of many "Western/historical romance novels," Drew Hayden Taylor, Ojibwe tribe, points out in his paper, "Indian Love Call." However, at this

point in the story, Bella says "he still had just a hint of childish roundness left around his chin" (Meyer, *Twilight* 119). Thus, the description of Jacob in *Twilight* seems to be pretty far from one laced in sexual innuendo or intent (as might be suggested in the films), and at no point in this book does Bella express any interest in Jacob physically.

There is a lot more to Jacob's characterization than his physical looks; his family and their life at La Push are very dynamic, which allows Meyer to avoid painting homogenous Native American characters or experiences. Vickers explains that "Stereotypes . . . tend to produce homogeneity and a static model of identity, fixed in a language and in time" (7). Thus, in order to avoid a sameness, Meyer offers readers different types of characters within Jacob's family. When Bella and Jacob first start talking at the beach in *Twilight,* he reminds her that he has two sisters, Rachel and Rebecca. Readers might immediately notice that Jacob and his sisters all have Biblical names. In fact, many Quileute members in the series do. In his work on the tribe, *Quileute: An Introduction to the Indians of La Push,* Jay Powell and Vickie Jensen explain that "In 1882 'civilization' reached the Quileutes in force when A.W. Smith established a school and set about providing Quileutes with names from the Bible" (41). Thus, the names of some of the Quileute members would hold true to Quileute history. Certainly not all Quileute parents would choose Biblical names, which further demonstrates difference. After Bella remembers his sisters, Jacob tells her that after high school, "Rachel got a scholarship to Washington State, and Rebecca married a Samoan surfer" (Meyer, *Twilight* 120). Jacob, who loves auto-mechanics, is an entirely different person from his sisters, who are even very different from each other. Billy, Jacob's father and a tribal elder, is restricted to a wheelchair, but maintains a very positive sense of humor, that is until he feels threatened by a nearby vampire. The first time Bella encounters Billy in *Twilight* is soon after she discovers Edward is a vampire. She describes Billy as a "much

older man, a heavyset man with a memorable face – a face that overflowed, the cheeks resting against his shoulders, with creases running through the russet skin like an old leather jacket. And the surprisingly familiar eyes, black eyes that seemed at the same time both too young and too ancient for the broad face they were set in" (Meyer, *Twilight* 234-235). Some might see Bella's description as leaning toward a wise, ancient elder stereotype, at this point Billy is one of the only human characters who knows the truth about the Cullens and thus, he does have a deeper wisdom of what's going on around him. And while Billy has a few similar characteristics to his son, he is described to be quite different looking from Jacob.

Debbie Reese insists that "when trying to convey the idea that Native people are scary and threatening, writers often use 'black' eye color to invoke a sense of fear" ("Meyer's *Twilight*"). She was, thus, not too happy with Billy's description. However, Meyer's familiar readers will notice that black eyes come up quite a few times in the book because Edward's eyes turn black to demonstrate anger and fear, and so it should be no surprise that when Billy discovers Bella is dating a vampire (as well as his ancient enemy), he could display the same emotions via his eye color. Besides that, the eye color that denotes evil and fear is red because that's the color vampires' eyes turn after they drink human blood. Therefore, Billy's eye color may be black due to Meyer's lack of deeper symbolism rather than because he is meant to be a scary character. Regardless, many like the fact "that these were modern Indians" (Micalaux), meaning that Meyer did not portray characters frozen in history as Vickers suggest is often done (Vickers 4). Overall, Meyer created a character in Jacob that "seemed real enough or common enough, a good kid interested in auto-mechanics, [with a] strong relationship with his father and friends," as Micalaux puts it, all of whom are very different from him.

Jacob has an important role as storyteller in *Twilight*. The Quileute legend explored in *Twilight* is really the backbone to the story, and Meyer presents it by referencing real Quileute legends. Wilson's and Leggatt and Burnett's essays demonstrate that there has been much criticism of Meyer in the way that she presents readers with a story involving the original Quileute wolves because besides altering the actual Quileute legend, Jacob divulges sacred information to Bella, a non-Native just because he likes her. In order for Bella to find out about Edward's true identity, she must get Jacob to divulge what he knows. She does this by charming and flirting with a young Jacob enough for him to tell her the information she needs on the Cullens – something that Debbie Reese claims a normal, young native boy raised on a reservation would never do because he would have been taught to respect his peoples' legends ("Meyer's *Twilight*"). But Meyer is avoiding typical portrayals because Jacob isn't exactly typical; normal young native boys don't turn into wolves. This story, as Susan Carpenter points out, "is set in a mythical version of Forks" (Carpenter). Jacob informs Bella that one legend of his people says the tribe "descended from wolves – and that the wolves are [their] brothers still" (Meyer, *Twilight* 124). There is some debate about this because some think that "The Quileute people do not even have a wolf myth in their cultural lexicon" (Guedel "*New Moon*"). However, according to Quileute members like Tribal Elder Roy Black, Jr. (notice the surname) in the documentary *Twilight in Forks*, this part of the legend holds true (*Twilight in Forks*). Chris Morganroth III, who once served on the Quileute tribal council, explains that their creation stories begin with a magic being, known as K'wati, and when K'wati arrived in La Push and noticed no people, he transformed a close pair of timber wolves into humans to occupy and care for the land (Dickerson).

The next part of the legend Jacob shares is the main part that critics have a problem with because it is entirely fiction. He tells Bella that the "cold ones" encountered early members of the tribe, causing those members to turn into wolves in order to protect the people from the vampires. However, it was Edward's family that Jacob's great-grandfather met when the tribe learned that the Cullens only hunt animals (Meyer, *Twilight* 124-125). There is nothing in Quileute legends that refer to the "cold ones" or the need to protect people from vampires by turning into wolves. In an interview, Meyer herself admits that after her extensive research into the tribe, "The only legend that is not a part of the Quileute tradition is the part I devised specifically to fit the Cullens" (Blasingame 632). While critics could argue that Meyer is desecrating a people's history, in "'An Old-Fashioned Gentleman'? Edward's Imaginary History," Kate Cochran suggests that Meyer employs a technique Cochran calls "imaginary history [which] refers to the different ways that history and literature borrow from each other" or it can "indicate the construction of an imaginary past, as it does in the *Twilight* Saga" (8-9).

The main thing to consider would be how this new history affects the Quileutes, to which Chris Morganroth III replies in a newspaper article in the *Peninsula Daily News*, "[H]er book is a work of fiction. . . . If Ms. Meyer wanted to make up a story about werewolves, that is her thing – it helped make the characters more interesting" (Dickerson). And, according to tribal councilwoman Anna Rose Counsell, the fans that are flocking to La Push to visit the reservation "give the Quileutes the opportunity to educate those about who we are by way of sharing our own stories, food, song and dance passed down from generation to generation" (Dickerson). The last part of the legend Jacob shares with Bella is extremely important to the series. Jacob's great-grandfather created a treaty with the Cullens that said as long as they stayed away from the reservation and didn't bite humans, the tribe would not expose their secrets to the "pale-faces"

(Meyer, *Twilight* 125). According to Leggatt and Burnett, this treaty may be based on some historical treaties that also involved the Quileutes:

> The uneasy peace that exists between the Cullens and the Quileute Nation in the first book of the series parallels similar treaties made between Native Americans and the settler governments of North America, including the Treaty of Olympia, signed between the Quileute Nation and the United States of America in 1856. The negotiation of the supernatural treaty and the drastic changes that were forced upon the Quileute people because of it not only parallel the specific historical relationship between the Quileutes and American settlers, but also reflect the larger framework of Native/non-Native relations, both legal and cultural, across North America. (Leggatt and Burnett 27)

Thus, because of the limitations imposed by the treaty, Meyer may have been creating a protagonist and the antagonist by making the wolves change in order to defend their tribe (and ultimately, Bella as well) against thirsty vampires. Meyer's portrayal of the Quileutes as the "good guys" continues in *New Moon* and encourages the reader to consider whether the Cullens are inherently evil.Vickers attests that this has not been the case in past literature featuring Native American characters, which are often portrayed as "a hostile other" (5).

At the beginning of *New Moon*, Jacob begins to grow at an extreme speed because of his upcoming wolf phasing. Many readers love Jacob "because he is portrayed as a somewhat regular teenage boy," according to Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, Melissa A. Click, and Jennifer Stevens Aubrey in "Relating to *Twilight*: Fans' Responses to Love and Romance in the Vampire Franchise" (Behm-Morawitz, Click, and Aubrey 139). The term "somewhat" becomes important when Jacob starts growing at an alarming speed, signifying his upcoming change. *New Moon*

shocks readers when Edward leaves Bella in the third chapter because he feels his presence endangers her life; he thus takes the choice to be with him out of her hands – a move that many see as proof that Edward is the "bad guy." John Granger says that alone and heartbroken, Bella turns to Jacob Black, the only person who might be able to help her forget the pain of heartbreak in his book on the series, *Spotlight* (Granger 122). At this point, readers learn how much Jake has changed since *Twilight*. His muscles "hardened into the solid, lanky build of a teenager . . . all childish roundness gone" in his face, and he reached a new height of "six five" (Meyer, *New Moon* 131). From that point, he keeps growing. In a scene that in the movie version has teenage girls screaming in glee, when Bella wrecks a motorcycle and gashes her head, Jacob removes his shirt in order to apply pressure to the wound. While studying the muscular change in Jacob's upper torso, Bella says, "The muscles were the long wiry kind, but they were definitely there under the smooth skin. His skin was such a pretty color, it made me jealous" (Meyer, *New Moon* 192). She then tells him, "Did you know, you're sort of beautiful" (Meyer, *New Moon* 192). Critics, as discussed earlier, see this moment paralleling the romance novels featuring the "Hot! Indian"(Micalaux). This spawns quite a bit of criticism regarding the *Twilight* films because Jacob and the Native actors rarely keep their shirts on, which displays their muscles enough to send hormonal fans screaming in frenzy. However, there are two very important things to keep in mind regarding the physical change in Jacob. One is that according to Powell and Jensen, the Quileute have always been known to be in great physical condition. They often had "contests of dexterity [and] strength . . . which comprised an important part of aboriginal community life" (Powell and Jensen 69). Another thing to remember is that Jacob and his friends are physically preparing themselves to be able to destroy vampires – quite a feat considering vampires are supposed to be indestructible. It's not that Jacob must play the role of the erotic other; it's that in

order to be successful at vampire destruction, he must be as strong as possible. Bella's noticing this fact lends itself to the foreshadowing of Jacob's fate as a vampire hunter.

Vickers says that another common stereotype is that of being "less than human" (5); however, Jacob must be more than human in order to kill something that preys on humans. Without transcending to a physical body capable of more strength and speed, it would be impossible to protect the tribe from a vampire because as Edward admits, his speed and strength make him "the world's best predator" (Meyer, *Twilight* 263). Because the films eroticize this situation to sell tickets to young girls, is hardly reason to ignore the purpose behind the changes in the novels. And in fact, in the movies, the Quileute boys spend an enormous amount of screen time without shirts on, but they never really explain why. The reason is simple – when they transition any clothes they wear will be in shreds. The less clothing they wear, the less they have to destroy. In order to avoid damages, the wolves have to carry clothes with them while they are in wolf form via a leather cord they tie to their leg for that very purpose. Bella asks Jacob why he doesn't wear much clothing and he says, "My clothes don't just pop in and out of existence when I change -- I have to carry them with me while I run. Pardon me for keeping my burden light" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 216). There are assuredly some sexual undertones when it comes to Jacob's physical descriptions because he is seen through the eyes of a teenage girl who may or may not be attracted to him; but there is a legitimate reason for his clothing choices.

Besides being the home to growing boys, the Quileute Reservation, in *New Moon*, is depicted as a place that struggles economically, but maintains strong tribal pride. One positive thing that several critics would surely agree on about the series is that Meyer creates Native American characters that live in modern times. A dominant stereotype found in many mainstream texts containing Native characters is that of the "Vanishing Indian" which suggests

that Native Americans are "outside of time and away from the seductions of modern existence," according to Christopher L. Miller in "Coyote's Game: Indian Casinos and the Indian Presence in Contemporary America" (Miller 194). And in fact the Quileutes do still exist and inhabit a reservation at La Push beach. Of the modern Quileutes, Powell and Jensen explain that, "Not only are there no tepees and feathers, but the Indians don't seem particularly noble, or, for that matter, very savage" (15). Therefore, Meyer had the challenge of creating a reservation that is modern, current, and a place lacking such extremes that its inhabitants become exotic others – and she does. When Edward leaves Bella, she comes to the reservation searching for a distraction. She purchases two run-down motorcycles and drives to Jacob's, hoping he can fix them up. She describes his house as "a small wooden place with narrow windows, the dull red paint making it resemble a tiny barn" (Meyer, *New Moon* 130). Some might argue that compared to Edward's great wealth, Jacob is described as being poor. Critics such as Natalie Wilson argue that Meyer thus presents Bella the choice of a rich sparkling white Edward and a poor Native American Jacob. However, Edward's wealth is a constant source of disagreement for him and Bella because she is uncomfortable with it. She is, however, more comfortable with Jacob economically because their families are closer on the economic scale (Wilson 59). It is also important to note that "many reservations, reserves, and indigenous villages continue to be socially and economically depressed," according to the National Museum of The American Indian (National Museum 124). Rebecca Housel argues that this also helps establish Jacob as a good guy. She says, "Jacob is grounded in humility and lives a life of moderation, he is more satisfied with life in general" ("The Tao" 239). And in *Eclipse* Bella calls his house her "refuge" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 100) and when she goes back after Edward's banning, Jake says "Welcome

back, Bella," sounding to Bella like he said "welcome home" (Meyer *Eclipse* 101). There is obviously some compatibility between Bella and Jacob.

Another important aspect of the reservation is the tribal pride that the members maintain. When Sam Uley, the leader of the wolf pack, first starts taking teenage boys under his wing on the reservation, Jacob does not know that the boys are phasing into wolves. Sam deters the boys from partaking in drugs, alcohol, or getting in any trouble. Jacob begins to believe Sam is leading a cult. He tells Bella, "They're all about *our land*, and *tribe pride* . . . it's getting ridiculous" (Meyer, *New Moon* 173). Reese insists that a young boy raised on the reservation would never mock tradition or take it so lightly in the way Jacob does ("Meyer's *Twilight*"). However, once Jacob phases, he, too, takes enormous pride in his tribe and the role they play as "protectors" (Meyer, *New Moon* 309). It becomes evident that Jacob enjoys being part of something special to his people. Whenever he surprises Bella with his speed, ability to heal, or any other anomaly, he smiles and says, "Wolf thing" (Meyer, *New Moon* 334) with a tone that lets Bella know that he is part of the exclusive in crowd. He tells Bella that out of all the wolves, he is able to phase in and out the easiest. When she asks why he says, "Because Ephraim Black was my father's grandfather and Quil Ateara was my mother's grandfather" (Meyer, *New Moon* 346). These were members of the original council that created the treaty with the Cullens, and the reverence in which he says the name demonstrates the awe he holds for his family background. Pride in the tribe is something that will continue to be displayed throughout the rest of the series. Even though the story takes place in modern times and the Quileutes are current people that may not be as wealthy as the Cullens, Jacob and his brothers are very proud of the role they hold amongst their people.

The wolves of *New Moon* are highly criticized because for many critics, they represent violence, but the wolves represent the importance of family and brotherhood within the tribe. The books definitely demonstrate that Jacob and the other wolves must learn to control their tempers so that they won't accidently harm those that aren't vampires. Sam has permanently damaged his fiancée Emily's face by transitioning too close to where she was standing. Jacob tells Bella that "Sam lost control of his temper for just one second . . . and she was standing too close. And now there's nothing he can ever do to put it right again" (Meyer, *New Moon* 345). Bella describes the wounds: "The right side of her face was scarred from hairline to chin by three thick, red lines, livid in color though they were long healed. One line pulled down the corner of her dark, almond-shaped right eye, another twisted the right side of her mouth into a permanent grimace" (Meyer, *New Moon* 331). There is also a scene in which Paul, another pack member, gets angry at Bella and phases and Jacob must phase to protect her (of course whether or not she might have been harmed is uncertain). In an interview, the actor who plays Paul in the movie, Alex Meraz, says, "[Paul] comes across as volatile, but I think he's misunderstood. He is very proud of being Quileute and is unapologetic about being a protector for his people" (Thorpe). Wilson contends that even Bella falls into the violent Native stereotype when she assumes the surrounding killings in the woods were done by the wolves (66). However, Bella discovers she is very wrong about the wolves because it is a vampire that is killing people and the pack is trying to protect their tribe by catching the murderer. The violence the wolves are capable of is proof to some that Meyer stereotypes her Native characters as being savage beasts. Wilson says, "Thus, Jacob alternates from being noble to being savage. . . . In *Twilight*, Jacob's 'good side' is brave, dedicated, protective, and loyal. His 'bad side' is temperamental, vindictive, violent, and undomesticated" (63). But rather than a stereotype, it seems that what Wilson has described is

the duality of human nature. All people have both noble and savage sides. Leggatt and Burnett add that, "Where the Cullens have learned to control their emotions and their natural impulse to drink human blood, the werewolves are a danger to those they love, a danger made clear by the scars Emily bears from Sam's attack" (35). But Sam didn't intentionally "attack" Emily; he lost his temper during their argument and Emily was standing too close during his transition. It was an accident that cost Sam a great deal of self respect and he spends the rest of the series trying to right the wrong by faithfully adoring Emily.

Meyer has also shown the Cullens have both noble and savage sides as well. The whole reason Edward left Bella (and the fact that he left her alone in the woods and lost could certainly be considered savage to some) is because his brother, Jasper, tried to attack Bella on her birthday. The beginning of *New Moon* takes place on Bella's birthday. When she gets a paper cut while opening presents, Jasper lunges at her "snapping his teeth" and "his wild, empty eyes focused only on [Bella]" (Meyer, *New Moon* 29). And while she is bleeding, every vampire but Carlisle must leave in order to avoid killing her. Thus, Meyer has presented that both sides have good intentions, but certainly a capability for violence – like most people in the world. What the wolves do display, however, is a strong connection with their families and each other. One scene that demonstrates this is when the boys first take Bella to Emily's house. Emily bakes muffins and while Jared and Embry are waiting for Jake, Paul, and Sam to return, they start to eat. Emily says, "Save some for your brothers," causing Bella to tell the reader, "The word surprised me, but the others thought nothing of it" (Meyer, *New Moon* 332). And indeed the boys do behave as brothers. When they all get back, the scene plays out like any family gathered for a meal. There is eating, teasing, and lots of laughing. There is another scene in which Bella and her father, the Blacks, and Sam and Emily enjoy a cake Emily has baked. The scene is again filled with

laughter and love. In another scene, the Blacks, the Clearwaters, and Bella and her father eat spaghetti in the yard at Billy's house. She talks about the dinner:

> The men talked about the game, and Harry and Charlie made fishing plans. Sue teased her husband about his cholesterol and tried, unsuccessfully, to shame him into eating something green and leafy. . . . It was loud and sometimes confusing as everyone talked over everyone else, and the laughter from one joke interrupted the telling of another. . . . I didn't want to leave. (Meyer, *New Moon* 150)

All of these scenes show togetherness and a strong family bond amongst those on the reservation. Micalaux comments on this scene: "Of all the scenes at La Push, the time in the garage building the bikes, the Spaghetti party with the Blacks and Clearwaters, and Breakfast Muffins with Emily felt the most authentic to me." Here, Meyer defies the common practice Vickers observes of portraying Indian characters without "cultural context, humor, or any 'spiritual condition,' or soul" (5), but these family moments at La Push demonstrate all three. Rather than portraying the characters as "symbols offering a counter-cultural way to Western post industrial culture and life," as Lee Schweninger argues in his book, *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape,* which many texts with Native characters and by non-Native authors do (19), Meyer shows how the bonds of love, brotherhood, and family are as common to the Quileutes as with many non-Native families. She breaks down the "us and them" to show how some things are common to the human condition – like having both good and bad sides, or having good friends and a loving family – regardless of race or ethnic background.

Family is important, but so are romantic relationships which, for the Quileute people, are portrayed as especially positive in the second book of the series. Romance and relationships are

two important aspects of the *Twilight* series, and *New Moon* is no exception. After all, when cut down to basics, the story is ultimately about a love triangle. According to Wilson, "Readers, like Bella, are encouraged to see Edward as the hero and Jacob as the best friend" (64). Wilson adds, "Jacob, a modern-day Tonto, is the trusty fun-loving sidekick fixing Bella's motorbike, holding her hand, cheering her up – but never capturing her heart or conquering with his mind" (64). Leggatt and Burnett agree saying that, "Edward constantly tries to keep Bella safe, even buying her a car with 'missile-proof glass and four thousand pounds of body armor,' while Jacob allows her to be reckless and teaches her to ride a motorcycle" (36). And as Greg Guedel points out in his blog, this is another common motif that has found its way in literature and film: "True to form, the Indigenous male plays the role of forbidden suitor to the nervous-yet-intrigued Caucasian female" ("*New Moon*"). These critics may have, however, confused Bella's bad choices with Jacob's role in the story. Edward is not a good guy! He tells Bella that he must always be on guard or he could kill her easily. He also tells her constantly, "You're not good for me, Bella" (Meyer, *New Moon* 70). He lies to her frequently throughout the stories and even tells her "I'm a good liar, Bella, I have to be" (Meyer, *New Moon* 509). In *Eclipse*, he dismantles her car to keep her from going to the reservation, he has his sister babysit her for a whole weekend, and he is even the one that decides that he won't have sex with her until she marries him and he constantly has to say, "Be good" when he feels that she gets carried away with her sexual advances. He treats her as weak person who is not capable of making her own decisions. And to top all that off, in order to be with Edward, she has to give up her family, friends, and even her human life so that she can be one of the undead. Edward is not a hero, and just because Bella is not a great role model for strong female characters, it does not mean that Jacob is not the best choice for her. If she were a woman who preferred the right to make her own choices regarding

her well being, she might be more inclined to pursue someone less controlling and bossy than Edward is, as evidenced by his actions regardless of what Bella or even Meyer would like to portray. Bella's own father prefers Jacob completely. He says, "The Blacks are practically family, Bella. . . . And Jacob has been a very, *very* good friend to you" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 13). Jacob accepts Bella just the way she is, without requiring her to change in anyway. Housel agrees, "Jacob does not ask Bella to change. . . . He's there for her, giving her respect and support" ("The Tao" 241). When Bella wants to ride motorcycles and she brings them to Jacob, he says, "Cool" (Meyer, *New Moon* 134). Bella is shocked that she didn't have to beg or that she wasn't treated like a baby, incapable of thinking for herself. Even as Bella is learning to ride the motorcycle, the voice of Edward calls her "reckless," "childish," and "idiotic" (Meyer, *New Moon* 184). And because Jacob treats Bella with such equality, she falls in love with him. She refers to him throughout the series as her "sun" and she says that he keeps her whole and together. However, she admits, "He was my best friend. I would always love him, and it would never, ever be enough" (Meyer, *New Moon* 219). Bella is so addicted to Edward, that she chooses the more destructive path to be with him, even though he treats her without the respect of an equal or as a person capable of making her own decisions.

Perhaps Jacob learns how to treat women on the reservation because the other relationships from the reservation that are mentioned in the series are very positive. There will be many relationships that come into play in the third and fourth book, but the most important one in *New Moon* is that of Sam and Emily. Even besides the fact that Sam accidently hurt Emily, the love between them is so great that Bella is intimidated by it. Bella observes that when Sam says Emily's name, "so much love saturated his voice. . . . I watched him cross the room in one stride and take her face in his wide hands. He leaned down and kissed the dark scars on her right cheek

before he kissed her lips" (Meyer, *New Moon* 333). She says the moment "was so real that it sang out loud with joy and life and true love" (Meyer, *New Moon* 333). Micalaux comments on the importance of this: "I adored the Sam and Emily pairing, honestly, I think my favorite thing, that felt so right, were the small moments between Sam and Emily – how rarely do we see Indians in popular lit, but even more rare an Indian couple in a loving, functional relationship." And relationships like this will continue to develop in the last two books of the series.

One of the most important things to keep in mind while reading *Twilight* and *New Moon* is that Stephenie Meyer is not Native American and yet, she still incorporates Native American characters into the core of the series. However, as Michelle Pagni Stewart contends, "Many children's literature critics agree that books written by non-natives are not necessarily bad" (185). There are many texts written by non-Natives that are plagued with racist ideas and stereotypical portrayals. And because the *Twilight* series are read by so many teenagers across the world, it is important to look closely into the way Meyer portrays Native American characters. While there must surely be some flaws in her writing (as she is not writing from the "inside" and thus, perfection cannot be expected), for the most part, Meyer does a good job avoiding stereotypes and creating characters that are deep and intricate. Micalaux adds regarding the characters as a whole, "It did feel good to read positive, mostly realistic portrayals of Native people in the present tense." The films have many more flaws due to Hollywood's ability to change things to gain ticket sales, but one positive thing about them is that it actually contains Native actors for many of the characters. The actor who plays Sam in the films, Chaske Spencer, says of the series, "We're not stereotypical. . . And I think the kids see us, not as Native, but just being people" (Webb). Chris Eyre, Cheyenne/Arapaho, a Native director well known for his film, *Smoke Signals*, says of the series, "'I think as long as the werewolves aren't wearing

loincloths, it is a good step forward," as quoted in the online article "Northwest Tribe Revels in 'Twilight' Spotlight," by Manuel Valdes (Valdes). Whether or not critics agree, or even if they hate the films, Jacob and the other Quileutes defy the stereotypes outlined by Vickers in one form or another in the books. And even if her portrayals are not perfect, they are modern and very dynamic characters. Maybe that is why there are so many teens pulling for Team Jacob!

CHAPTER 2: CROSSING ENEMY LINES

Debbie Reese addresses the two biggest problems, as she sees them, delivered by children's authors writing about Native American characters: "For the most part, children . . . see stereotypes of Native Americans that lead them to believe either that Indians don't exist anymore, or that Indians are very exotic people who wear feathers and live in ways vastly different from their own" ("Mom"). Luckily, Stephenie Meyer is writing about characters who live in modern times, and they don't wear feathers. Set within a mythical world threatened daily by vampires, her characters are really not that exotic either -- even if they do transition into wolves in order to protect their tribe. Really, they are everyday people that most readers would be able to identify with. If Meyer's Quileutes became more predictable in the third and forth books in the series, readers may have decided to forgo the reading of them. Fortunately for her and her readers, Meyer's series continues to present complex portrayals of Native Americans and reservation life in those last two books as well as the first two. In doing so, she avoids the stereotypes that Vickers defines as being the most common among non-Native writers and she continues to show dynamic, relatable characters. In *Eclipse* Meyer further introduces the readers to the diversity of the Quileute wolf pack, the importance of oral tradition within the community, women, and relationships. The last installment in the series, *Breaking Dawn*, explains Meyer's definition of imprinting, pack dynamics, how the love triangle is resolved. It is the only book in the series that allows another point-of-view besides Bella's – that of Jacob Black. Both books continue develop well-rounded Quileute characters that defy traditional stereotypes.

Like *New Moon*, *Eclipse* displays a strong family component of life on the Quileute reservation. When Jacob is telling Bella that his fried Quil has finally transitioned to a wolf, he tells her that most of the wolves really like the ability to change forms. One reason for this is

because it offers "the sense of – of *family*" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 114). In "Judging Authors by the Color of Their Skin? Quality Native American Children's Literature," Michelle Pagni Stewart contends that it is common in American Indian literature to offer a "focu[s] on the community and the way each character's life revolves around and influences the lives of others" (187). Meyer certainly does this by showing the togetherness of the wolf pack. Some have a problem with Meyer's usage of the term "pack." Wilson says that the fact that Meyer calls Jacob's group a "pack" and the Cullen's group a "clan" offers readers the idea that the Cullens are more civilized than the "pack" because of its animal associations (Meyer, *Eclipse* 62). However, most of the time the Cullens are referred to as a "coven," which offers readers the association of witchcraft and would therefore be no more positive than pack, which is often used in modern society to describe a close group of friends (Meyer, *Eclipse* 575). Besides, "clan" really doesn't offer any more positive images for Americans than "coven" does. And as for the pack, Meyer does a great job of offering a dynamic group of people. In his essay, "Us and Them" Åsebrit Sundquist says that Native Americans are not made up of homogeneous groups. Each member of the pack has a unique individual personality and purpose. Jacob is the "cool guy" (Housel, "The Tao" 244), Paul is temperamental, Leah is strong willed, Seth has a sense of adventure, and Sam "is someone who values commitments . . . [and] takes his commitment to the pack seriously" (Worley 109). Gil Birmingham, the actor who plays Billy in the movies, says, "Billy simply loves his son and his family (tribe). . . . Billy is the glue that holds the tribe and its traditions together" (Sherman). Besides being completely unique, the pack members even look different because they look different in human form. Billy says, "The wolves were all different, because they were spirit wolves and reflected the man they were inside" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 251). The physical description of the wolves is loosely based on the person's outward appearance and even

skin color. Jacob is “reddish-brown,” one wolf is “light gray,” another is “the color of desert sand,” and even Sam is “black as midnight” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 399). Thus, Meyer avoids the mistake of making all the Native American characters look or act the same because in reality, all people are different – even if they are members of the same tribe. In “‘Mom, look! it's George, and he's a TV Indian!,’” Debbie Reese says to end the misconceptions children have about Native Americans, “We can help them by reading books to them that provide information about contemporary Native Americans, and that accurately portray the diversity among Native American people” (Reese, “Mom”). Certainly Meyer offers readers characters that are varied in both personality and physical description.

After member diversity, one of the most important plot elements of *Eclipse* is also one of the most important aspects of Native American culture – oral tradition. The oral tradition has long been a part of Native American history and culture. Lois J. Einhorn says that “The oral tradition is not one of several parts of Native American culture, it *is* the culture, simultaneously reflecting and manifesting it” (7). Because oral tradition is such an important aspect of Native American life, it appropriately plays a central role in the series. Jacob brings Bella to the retelling of “The Third Wife’s Sacrifice” by Billy. He tells Bella that she would be hearing “the histories we always thought were legends. The stories of how we came to be” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 243). Because Billy is considered a leader in his tribe, he also serves as a primary story or history teller. Bella says, “Billy cleared his throat, and . . . began telling the story in his rich, deep voice. The words poured out with precision, as if he knew them by heart, but also with feeling and a subtle rhythm. Like poetry performed by its author” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 244). Besides using the story to provide important plot elements, Leggatt and Burnett argue, “Meyer also draws upon Native American traditions of oral history in order [to] make her story more compelling and

perhaps give it a degree of realism and truth" (36). The story of "The Third Wife's Sacrifice" is a story about the first time tribal members turned into wolves. Leggatt and Burnett say that "While there are no such legends in the Quileute tradition . . . these stories in the *Twilight* Saga as history that has been mistaken for myth demonstrates the importance of oral history to the Quileute people and its application to present-day circumstances" (37). This is important because Vickers attests that many writers offer Native American characters that "[have] no historical reality" (5). So while Meyer does provide her Quileute characters with that history via an invented oral tradition, others might think she allowed popular desire to overtake traditional practice by allowing Bella attend the storytelling session. The page "Indian Country Etiquette" on the Quileute Nation website notes that "spiritual teachings [and] sacred ceremonies . . . are not openly shared with the public." Even Bella is shocked that she was invited: "I'd started to worry about showing up with him at the bonfire. . . . Would they be angry with Jacob for inviting me?" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 240). However, Edwin S. Chupman says, "Practitioners, beneficiaries, and those who participate according to cultural protocols are allowed to attend" such meetings and events (National Museum 111). Certainly Bella could be considered a beneficiary because at this point in the story, her life is totally intertwined with the Quileutes as she is a major threat to their treaty with the Cullens. If she becomes a vampire, the treaty will be broken. Also, she knows all their secrets from dating a mind-reading vampire who can read the minds of the Quileute characters. So they accept her as part of the entire vampire situation. She says, "I was treated like someone who belonged" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 241). And what about the actual Quileute tribe – do they allow outsiders to come to such events? One such event the Quileute host is a drum circle. Recently, Su-jin Yim reported, "The tribe opened its Wednesday night drum circle to all visitors, which recently included two families of '*Twilight*' fans" (Yim). So, if the tribe has allowed *Twilight*

fans into their drum circle, there's a good chance they would let Bella into something similar – especially since she's so involved.

Another important role of the story of "The Third Wife's Sacrifice" is that it demonstrates the role of women within the Quileute tribe. "The Third Wife's Sacrifice" is about a vampire attack that occurred during the time of Jacob's ancestors. A male vampire kills several members of the tribe and those that transition to wolves kill him before he can hurt others. The vampire's wife then comes to the tribe for her revenge. One of the wives realizes when her husband turns to a wolf that the vampire is strong and will certainly overtake the remaining tribal members. The wife grabs a knife and rather than attacking the vampire as the vampire thinks she will (which would have no effect on the vampire's tough skin), the wife "plunged the knife into her own heart" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 258). The vampire is then weakened by her thirst from the smell of the blood and the wolf destroys her. Bella realizes the significance of the wife's sacrifice: "Just a human woman, with no special gifts or powers. Physically weaker and slower than any of the monsters in the story. But she had been the key, the solution. She'd saved her husband. Her young sons, her tribe" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 260). The reverence shown to the third wife by the tribe demonstrates the respectful place the tribe has placed women as equals among their husbands. In her essay, "The Pocahontas Imagology: Where Have All the Native American Women Gone?," Helena Jógi's notes that in Native American communities "By and large, gender democracy or gender autonomy prevailed – men and women were regarded as balancing each other and were treated as an equally valuable part of the community" (68). This story is also important because it parallels the role Bella wishes to play as the martyr that saves the lives of those she loves.

Even more evidence of female equality is found in this in the role of Sue and Leah Clearwater. Harry Clearwater has a heart attack in *New Moon* and dies. In *Eclipse* when Bella

goes to the bonfire she sees Sue, Harry's widow, sitting in the circle. She says, "This surprised me. . . . it sounded to me like she'd taken Harry's place on the council" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 241). And indeed she had. Devon A Mihesuah says in regards to many tribes, "In many cases Indian women did indeed have religious, political, and economic power -- not more than the men, but at least equal to men" (172). Leah, Sue's daughter, also plays an extremely important role in demonstrating the role of women within the tribe; she transitions to become the first female wolf. Edward tells Bella, "They always accepted without question that it was only the direct grandsons of the original wolf who had the power to transform." Bella asks if someone transformed that wasn't a direct descendant and Edward replies, "No. She's a direct descendant, all right" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 416). Leah becomes extremely independent and she often feels isolated because she is the only female wolf. Thus, she is recognized as a strong female who adds to the way in which Meyer makes the Quileute female members just as important as the men. Leah transitioning to a wolf is a big deal because there are no known female shape-shifters in the tribe before her. So before readers can really wonder why there are no females in the current pack, Meyer supplies one to demonstrate that indeed women do seem to occupy similar positions as men within the tribe.

Relationships are a large part of life on the Quileute reservation. Bella may not be a Quileute woman, but Jacob's feelings for her become most important in *Eclipse* as it focuses on the love triangle between Bella, Jacob, and Edward. Liz Hill says, "Native people today conduct their romances in a variety of ways. Romance leading to marriage outside one's tribe and with people of other races have become as commonplace for Native peoples as for other Americans" (National Museum 193). Thus, it is not highly unusual for Jacob to have feelings for Bella even though she is not Quileute. What is unusual, however, is that so many fans pull for Edward when

it is Jacob who consistently treats Bella as an equal rather than a weaker person. Jacob makes Bella a graduation present of a little wooden carving of a wolf "carved out of some red-brown wood that matched the color of his skin" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 374). It is interesting to note that Powell and Jensen say, "Among the most characteristic examples of Quileute craft were those artifacts made from red cedar" (19). Whether Meyer knew this or not, it makes the gift very appropriate. Edward soon notices the wolf on a bracelet and asks why she will accept gifts from Jacob and not Edward. He adds, "Have you noticed the inequality? . . . Because I certainly have" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 413). Ironically, there is quite a lot of inequality in the way Edward treats Bella. In one scene that surely angered many feminists, Edward dismantles Bella's car in order to prevent her from visiting Jacob (Meyer, *Eclipse* 62-63). When Jacob invites Bella to the bonfire to hear the legends, Jacob realizes Edward may not *let* her go. He says, "You know, I saw this story on the news last week about controlling, abusive teenage relationships" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 224). Therefore, as Leah McClimans and J. Jeremy Wisnewski point out in their essay "Undead Patriarchy and the Possibility of Love," "Jacob recognizes how controlling Edward is" (McClimans and Wisnewski 165). Some critics like Leggatt and Burnett, however, argue that Jacob is just as bad (36). Twice Jacob kisses Bella and both times it is almost forced on her. The first time he kisses her and when she tries to fight him off, he continues to try and get her to kiss him back (Meyer, *Eclipse* 330-331). But it's important to note that Jacob is a young boy and he does give in to his impulses every now and again – a fault that many people are guilty of, regardless of their ethnic background. Her father understands this because when Jacob tells him that her hand is broken because she hit him after he kissed her, Charlie says to him, "Good for you, kid" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 336). So her father sees Jacob's kiss as the action of a teenage boy and it has nothing to do with him being Quileute. The second time Jacob plays the role of the "Noble

Savage" by saying he will purposely be killed in battle so that she won't have the dilemma of choosing him or Edward, something Edward claims via mind-reading that he never had any real intention of doing. So to keep him from doing anything reckless, Bella screams out, "Kiss me, Jacob. Kiss me, and then come back" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 525). And then in a moment of teenage melodrama, Bella realizes that she does have romantic feelings for Jacob. In spite of his two moments of weakness, Jacob generally treats Bella as his equal. He is always honest and upfront with her, even though she is not with him as the instance illustrates when Edward tries to hide the fight Emmett and Paul had from her because he doesn't think Bella can handle the truth; Jacob tells her anyway. Jacob tells Edward, "She's tougher than you think" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 81). Housel comments on this:

> Jacob encourages Bella to be herself, regardless of how it affects him, regardless of what he wants. He never threatens her. He supports her no matter what, even when it is in direct conflict with his own desires. He respects Bella as a person and truly wants to make her happy, even if it means watching her become the pet of a vampire and his family. He's the only one who stands up to Bella when she endangers her life in pursuit of Edward, risking the friendship Jacob values more than anything else because Jacob is *truly* Bella's friend" ("The 'Real' Danger" 188).

The way in which Jacob treats Bella like an equal partner is also evident in *New Moon* and *Breaking Dawn*; it is an integral part of the series.

While imprinting is mentioned in other books, *Breaking Dawn* allows readers an even closer look into this very interesting relationship aspect. *Eclipse* is really the first book that explains what "imprinting" is. Jacob explains to Bella that Sam has imprinted on Emily. Jacob

says, “Sometimes . . . we don’t exactly know why . . . we find our mates that way . . . I mean . . . our soul mates” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 123). Edward later elaborates for Bella what imprinting entails (which he learned via his mind reading abilities): “The imprinting compulsion is one of the strangest things I’ve ever witnessed in my life. . . . It reminds me of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with all the chaos caused by the fairies’ love spells . . . like magic” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 418). What’s interesting about this idea of imprinting is that it may actually be more related to actual Quileute history than it seems. Quileute tribal member and storyteller Chris Morganroth III explains that K’wait, the Transformer, saw that La Push was empty, and changed two nearby timber wolves into people in order to care for the land. He also says, “Now these wolves always travel in pairs and they mate for life” (Dickerson). Thus, if the original wolves that were transformed into Quileute mated for life, then perhaps imprinting is the way in which Meyer represents that connection. Imprinting also plays a huge role in *Breaking Dawn* because Jacob finally imprints on, or finds his soul mate in, Bella and Edward’s daughter. When Jacob first sees Renesmee he says, “I could see . . . how the universe swirled around this one point. I’d never seen the symmetry of the universe before, but now it was plain. The gravity of the earth no longer tied me to the place where I stood. It was [Renesmee] that held me here now” (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 360). Many critics argue that Jacob was doomed to fail at gaining Bella’s hand because he was Native American; for example, Guedel says that “Jacob is thus consigned to the old-Hollywood role of the ‘noble savage’ – good enough to fight, kill, and die for the white female, but beyond that they can be nothing more than ‘friends’” (“*Eclipse*”). Wilson adds that for various reasons, “Readers, like Bella, are encouraged to see . . . Jacob as the best friend” (64). However, this is proved wrong by the fact that Jacob does get the “white female” in the end; it is just not the one readers may have expected. And actually, she is the product of the two whitest

characters in the book. Leggatt and Burnett suggest that the fact that Edward wins the heart of Bella is proof that colonizers will always win (43). Then they go on to say that Jacob's imprinting on Renesmee "suggests ways in which Native culture and identity are appropriated by the colonizers to legitimize their claim to the land" (43). But it cannot be both ways. If Jacob had not ended up with a "white female," then critics would point out that he was too "savage" or too "native" to be an appropriate choice for Meyer to select for one of her white characters. However, now that he learns his soul mate is white, then critics say that he must always be at the will of the white "colonizers." How could such a conundrum ever be solved?! While there may not be an immediate answer, Meyer did offer a solution to the problem of Jacob always being seen as just "the friend" by using an idea that may have some historical basis and inventing a new character that will be Jacob's perfect match. This vampire-Quileute pairing will conveniently create a sort of uneasy peace between the vampires and Quileutes for future years.

Other than imprinting, the reader must consider some other interesting pack characteristics such as leadership and free will when analyzing Quileute representations. Both the wolves and the vampires are governed by laws. The Cullens and all other vampires are ruled by the Volturi. Sam is the leader of the wolf pack. Readers find out in *Eclipse* that if the tribe were still governed by a chief, then Billy would be the leader. Thus, because Jacob is the chief's son, he should be pack leader. However, in *Eclipse*, we learn that Jacob gave up that role because he didn't want the responsibility of being the pack's leader (Meyer, *Eclipse* 484). He says, "I didn't want any of it, Bella. I didn't want anything to change. [I]t sort of felt like being drafted into a war you didn't know existed" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 484). Another reason Jacob may not want to be the leader is because the leader of the pack is the law and all wolves must obey it, which makes the reader question how much free will the members of the pack have. When the wolves

find out that Bella is pregnant, Sam is terrified because no one knows what the baby might turn out to be. Sam tells the pack that they must prevent the birth of something that could be a major risk for the tribe. Jacob, being the voice of reason, wants to wait until the baby's birth before doing anything rash. Sam tells him, "*You* will *fight with us tonight*," and Jacob says, "I struggled to hold myself upright while the voice of the Alpha lashed at my will" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 203). As John Granger points out, "It is interesting to note here that the Quileute shape-shifting wolfmen are virtuous and use their paranormal powers only for good, but there is little choice or freedom in this virtue" (53).

But other characters are just as bound as the wolves are. Granger sees this commonality: "[N]one of the Quileute protectors or the Cullen family chose to be wolfmen or vampires" (68). Thus, the characters have to work with the deck they've been dealt. It is also important to understand that the Cullens are also bound by the laws of the Volturi. Bree, a newborn vampire, is destroyed because the Volturi deem it to be necessary, even though she chooses to become docile like the Cullens (Meyer, *Eclipse* 578). Whether or not Bella has free will is also questioned. Edward decides everything from their sex life to whether or not she is even allowed to go places. And in *New Moon*, Meyer shows that Edward even takes away the choice of being with him by removing himself from a her life – much like an adult takes away a toy from a small child when they decide the child has played with the toy enough. Thus, Meyer may be questioning whether or not anyone actually has free will. And certainly it is compromised when a person is a member of such an exclusive club. This may parallel Meyer's own limitations which result in being an active member of the Church of Latter Day Saints. In order to stay part of that group, Mormons must do or not do certain things or ex-communication is possible. And this is basically what happens to Jacob when he goes against Sam's orders. Basically "Jacob decides he

doesn't have to obey Sam. He breaks the hold Sam has on him" (Worley 112). Jacob realizes he "had not been born to kneel to [Sam]" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 209). Then he adds, "The bonds fell off my body the second that I embraced my birthright . . . and I had no pack. For a second, loneliness overwhelmed me" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 209). There are two important things that readers must gain from this move. One is that as Meyer shows, when one is a member of such a close group and leaves it for his or her own personal will, loneliness can certainly be a result. Another important point is that even though he is not the Alpha of the pack, "Jacob is a leader because he takes responsible action when necessary, regardless of his desires" (Housel, "The Tao" 239). Granger agrees that "he makes hard choices when he recognizes the right thing to do" (54). Rather than adhering to stereotypes that Native Americans lack "rights to an autonomous selfhood" (Vickers 5), Meyer shows that all her characters belong to a private club and are thus governed by the club's rules. This often results in following a leader, but it is not just her Native characters that must; and at least, unlike any of the Cullens or Bella, Jacob gets to be his own leader in the end!

Leadership and will become incredibly important in the climactic fight of *Breaking Dawn* – the moment that all the other books have prepared readers for. After Jacob imprints with Renesmee and breaks from Sam to form a new pack, his world becomes threatened by the Volturi who come to destroy the child and the Cullen family. That leaves both packs with only one choice – to stand by the Cullens in war. Leggatt and Burnett observe, "Ironically, in both the imaginary text and history, the behavior of rogue entities forces the two parties of the treaty to work together in order to maintain peace" (38). And in this case, the "rogue entities" are the Volturi. In order to fight together, the wolves and the vampires must essentially rewrite the original treaty another time. The first is when they think Bella will change, because even though

it may require a vampire biting a human, it is by her own choice. The second time is because as Bella says, "No wolf [can] ever kill the object of another's imprinting. The pain of such a thing would be intolerable for the whole pack" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 456). Leggatt and Burnett contend that "Vampires symbolize the many historical and contemporary social and economic problems that arose in Native communities as a result of colonization" (31). And if that is the case then, "The renegotiations of the treaty in the novels are indicative of the breaking and reworking of treaties that have taken place throughout the history of the United States" (32). What Meyer does, however, is bond the wolves and the vampires through Jacob's love for Renesmee; similar things have been done for many families that are separated by race or ethnicity. It's not that Jacob must fight with the Cullens because he cares for them or he feels he owes them anything, he fights for his love of Renesmee. This is not the first time the wolves have fought with the Cullens against a common enemy. The two groups also joined forces in *Eclipse* to fight the newborn vampire army. Guedel comments on the two working together: "One aspect of *Eclipse* actually rings true from an historical perspective – white settlers enlisting Native people to fight their battles for them" ("*Eclipse*"). Vickers says that a dominant stereotype in literature is that of a "subservient yet honorable character, capable of assisting the dominant culture in the fulfillment if its destiny" (4). However, the wolves were not fighting for the Cullens; in both books the wolves fought for the well being of their tribe – the only thing they have really had at the heart of all their decisions. If a newborn army or the Volturi reside in Forks, then there is a chance they will go to the reservation to feed just like the vampires did in "The Third Wife's Sacrifice." Sam's pack will probably never see the Cullens as friends, and never did, but the bond that results between the Cullens and Jacob is the result of Jacob's love for Renesmee – not his love for the Cullens! And if it is true that "Romance leading to marriage

outside one's tribe and with people of other races have become as commonplace for Native peoples as for other Americans" (National Museum 193), then Jacob's actions should be entirely justified and understandable rather than being seen as a stereotypical ideal.

Another thing that distinguishes *Breaking Dawn* from the other books in the series is that it is the only book that allows someone other than Bella to tell the story. The *Twilight* Saga was meant to be Bella's story, but in "Book Two" out of three in *Breaking Dawn*, Jacob becomes the narrator, rather than Bella. This provides an even deeper glimpse into Jacob's character. It also allows for a real "emotional connection with the cultural or ethnic group represented," as Francis Smardo Dowd says all multicultural texts should (221). At the end of *Eclipse*, Jacob finds out Bella is engaged to Edward and he transitions to a wolf and runs away from home. In *Breaking Dawn*, he returns to be with his family. Stewart points out that "Contrary to the white American novel whereby a character gains self-identity by leaving home – and would be considered a failure if he were to return to the fold – Native American novels are characterized by protagonists who need to return home and connect with their community in order to begin to understand their identity as Native Americans" (191). And when Jacob returns, he does have a stronger sense of who he is as a person because he has relied on nothing but his instincts; by being more grounded during an extremely chaotic time, he makes a great narrator for "Book Two" of *Breaking Dawn*. The first thing readers will notice are the chapter titles which are entirely different from every other chapter title in the series. The other chapter titles contain one or two words whereas the titles of Jacob's chapters are full sentences, which often convey Jacob's distinctive sense of humor. Some memorable ones are "Waiting for the Damn Fight to Start Already" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 145), "Why Didn't I Just Walk Away? Oh Right, Because I'm an Idiot" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 185), and "You Know Things Are Bad When

You Feel Guilty for Being Rude to Vampires" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 268). Jacob's humor is one of the most memorable things about him, and Arwen Nuttall says that "Humor has always been an aspect of Native life, binding families and communities, regulating social behavior, and providing a release in times of strife" (National Museum 62). He certainly provides comic relief in the traumatic moments leading up to Bella's human death. When Bella first attempts to drink blood to keep her baby alive (because it does not seem to be responding to human food), Edward is listening to the very comic thoughts going through Jacob's head. When he chuckles, Bella's asks if something is funny and Edward says, "Jacob." "Jake's a crack-up," Bella replies. Jacob thinks, "Great, now I was the court jester. 'Bada *bing*,' I mumbled in weak rim-shot impression" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 251). Jacob's narration contains many laugh-out-loud moments, and may be the only time readers have an extended humorous narration, which breaks up the dark tone of the rest of the book. Having his own narration also allows readers to see the difference in the way Edward and Jacob think about things. Edward worries that Bella will die during childbirth and begs her to have an abortion. He tells Jacob that if Bella wants a child that he will stand aside and support her if she and Jacob want to create children. He asks Jacob to try and persuade her to do this. This is how Jacob responds:

> I felt like – like I don't know what. Like this wasn't real. Like I was in some Goth version of a bad sitcom. Instead of being the A/V dweeb about to ask the head cheerleader to the prom, I was the finished-second-place werewolf about to ask the vampire's wife to shack up and procreate. Nice. No, I wouldn't do it. It was twisted and wrong. I was going to forget all about what he'd said. (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 185)

Wilson comments that "In general, the Quileute characters are less glowingly described than the white Cullens" (61). And when Bella is the narrator she is always focused on Edward and his family more than Jacob's because she wants to be part of them. However, in the pages in which Jacob gets to talk, it becomes clear via passages like this one that Jacob seems to be more socially and morally grounded than Edward. Vickers says that authors often write about Native characters "lacking any conscious or moral motivation" (5), but Jacob seems to have a much stronger sense of personal ethics than Edward does. Jacob never does tell Bella, but one must wonder what she would say if she knew Edward was trying to find someone else to have sex with her – not a very romantic gesture. And it's another way Edward tries to force her choices on her. If she agrees to procreate with Jacob, then she will abort the fetus she now carries, which is what he has been urging her to do.

Stewart contents that "Some authors continue to depict American Indian culture as foreign, as something 'other' that must be brought into the field of American culture rather than celebrated for its distinction" (181). Because there are so many young people of all races that are proudly supporting Team Jacob, readers have to wonder if Meyer did something right. *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* further demonstrate how the series attempts to avoid common Native American stereotypes. And even though critics like Berkhofer admit that "In light of the history of white Indian imagery, it seems certain that the term and the idea of Indian otherness will continue into the future" (196), Meyer offers readers characters that are not only people of the here and now, but even with the ability to turn into wolves, they are relatable to most readers because they are not written to be an "other," they are written to be average teenage kids who happen to be Native American and who happen to be shape-shifters. By avoiding common stereotypes, Meyer has reintroduced Native American awareness and pride into popular culture.

This is especially significant because her series sells without enforcing the traditional or popular images of Native Americans that have so often made their way into popular media!

CHAPTER 3: THE SERIES AS YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

One of the most important things to consider when looking at literature for young adults and children is the lasting image or idea that the text leaves with such impressionable minds. *How to Tell the Difference: A Guide for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias* by Doris Seale, Beverly Slapin and Rosemary Gonzales clearly identifies guidelines for deciding whether or not books for young people offer positive Native American representation. According to Oyate.org, "This book has been helpful to so many authors, parents and educators over the years that we believe we have helped raise all of our expectations, which in turn has enriched the publishing industry" ("How to Tell"). This book outlines such things as the role of women, elders, dialogue, diction, and other criteria in order to determine the worth and validity of a text for young readers. By using this guide and evaluating the areas of stereotypes, diction, and tokenism, the presentation of history, lifestyles and dialogue, standards of success, the role of women and elders, and how the text affects Native American children as well as the author's background, - -readers will be able to determine that Meyer's *Twilight* saga offers more positive than traditional portrayals of Native Americans for young readers, and even though it is a work of fiction and fantasy, it attempts to offer a somewhat realistic depiction of Native American characters.

Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales identify "Stereotypes," "Loaded Words," and Tokenism" as three areas that should be critically evaluated in books containing Native American characters. In order to avoid stereotypes: "Native peoples should be shown as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies" and tribal peoples should be "presented as separate from each other, with each culture, language, religion, [and] dress unique" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 5-6). Hopefully previous chapters have highlighted how Meyer avoids common

stereotypes. But for a brief mention, certainly the Quileute people in the series are portrayed as a "highly defined and complex societ[y]." Even the wolf pack is heterogeneous. In *Eclipse*, Edward, who can read minds, even tells Bella, "I had no idea how complex the dynamic is with such a large pack" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 416). Meyer also attempts to make the tribe completely heterogeneous. As mentioned in a previous chapter, each tribal member is entirely unique in personality and appearance – even in wolf form. Chaske Spencer, the actor who plays the pack's Alpha, Sam, is also "a member of the Lakota Sioux tribe" (Webb). About stereotypes Spencer says, "There are a lot of misconceptions about Natives of the U.S. Some people still think we live in teepees" (Murray). However, he says that what's great about the *Twilight* series "is that the kids accept us for who we are. We are not leather and feather. They accept us" (Murray). Thus, he believes that the series defies traditional stereotypical images of Native Americans.

Concerning "loaded words," Slapin, Seale and Gonzales question whether or not the text has "insulting overtones to the language . . . [and whether] racist adjectives [are] used to refer to Indian peoples" or whether "the language is respectful" (8). The main way in which this might come into question in the *Twilight* series is how the Native characters are constantly belittled by the Cullens. Certain members of the Cullen family constantly refer to the pack by names that are associated with canines. On the flipside, Jacob and some of his friends constantly refer to the Cullens as "bloodsuckers," leeches," or something similar. The terms used become a way to distinguish wolf from vampire and seem to have nothing to do with either's race or ethnicity. While it can't be ignored that the wolves are Native Americans, *Breaking Dawn* shows readers that there are vampires of all races and they are referred to by Jacob in the same way as the Cullens. Had the wolves been white, the same terms would have been used. Thus, race does not seem to be the primary consideration for the characters. The language is often respectful. When

Billy begins the story at the bonfire Bella says, “Billy cleared his throat, and . . . began telling the story in his rich, deep voice. The words poured out with precision, as if he knew them by heart, but also with feeling and a subtle rhythm. Like poetry performed by its author” (Meyer, *Eclipse* 244). By trying to use respectful language, however, authors may also come close to “tokenism” because authors try hard to avoid stereotypes. This makes it seems that Native American characters are used for the role they play rather than their actually being an important character with a unique presence. The Native characters must be “genuine individuals” (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 9). In “American Indians in Children's Books,” Janet Coulon says that it is “easy [to] turn respect and admiration into a glorified presentation” when writing about Native American characters (171). But in the series the tribe is completely dynamic. Where Sam is described as upright and rigorous, Paul is depicted as easily angered and irrational. And what’s most important is that every character has both positive and negative traits, making them realistic portrayals. Wilson says that Jacob is a “good Indian” by being a good friend, “bad Indian” by being angry about Bella’s and Edward’s relationship, and a “degraded Indian” by being portrayed as a young, immature boy (66-68). But it seems that what Wilson just described was a person who has both positive and negative qualities. He is not one-sided, but is genuine in the fact that he is complex and multi-faceted.

How a tribe or person’s history is presented is another important area to consider according to Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales. The first question posed by the guide deals with land conquest and colonization. Because the *Twilight* series does not deal with historical topics going that far back, the question is not entirely relevant to Meyer’s work. This is one of Meyer’s biggest shortcomings, however. The Quileutes seem to be so wrapped up in the supernatural in the story that the reality of being isolated to a reservation in economic decline and the history of

colonization that created that situation is ignored. Perhaps this is one of *Twilight*'s biggest weaknesses as a multicultural text and the reason it is largely not considered as such. The next question, however, asks whether or not readers are "to believe that Native peoples accepted defeats passively? Or [whether] the story shows ways in which Native peoples actively resisted the invaders" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 11). Readers are also asked to determine whether or not Native characters are seen as heroes for what they did to help their attackers or if they are heroes for how they have helped their own people (12). When Bella goes to the bonfire to hear the Quileute stories, Billy tells of the first Spirit Warriors. He says that because the Quileute were a small tribe, before any white people came, other tribes would try to overtake the land. He says that the tribe went out in ships to avoid takeover. Kaheleha, a Spirit Warrior, left his body on the ship with others to go back and fight the opposing tribe. Billy says, "They could not physically touch the enemy tribe, but they had other ways. . . . Kaheleha took his spirit army and wreaked havoc on the intruders" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 245). Thus, from the beginning, Meyer shows how the Quileutes have always fought back for their land against opposing tribes. Meyer doesn't, however, discuss how they fought back for their land from colonizers. Meyer also created Native American characters that turn into wolves. While this is a work of fantasy, she did base that concept on the original Quileute creation story. The traditional Quileutes believe that The Changer set life in motion by changing two wolves into people and telling them to inhabit La Push, according to past Quileute tribal council member, Chris Morganroth III (Dickerson). In the series, Meyer makes the Quileute turn into wolves as a means of resistance to vampires that may threaten the tribe. Leggatt and Burnett observe that, "While the historical Quileute had to accept and use the settlers' legal system – a system foreign to their way of being – in order to fight for their rights, the fictional Quileute change their nature in a more literal way, becoming

supernatural creatures in order to combat a supernatural threat" (30). Thus, the fictional Quileutes did not "accep[t] defeat passively" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 11); by transitioning into wolves, the Quileutes could fight the vampires that threaten the life of the tribe. This shape-shifting also shows how Meyer created characters that "actively resist[e] the invaders" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 11). Bella is constantly worried that the wolves will get hurt when they are hunting vampires because vampires are so strong. However, Jacob tells her, "It's what we're made for, Bells. We're strong, too" (Meyer, *New Moon* 311). Thus, it would seem that as long as there is a threat, the fictional Quileutes will continue to transform so that they will be able to protect the tribe.

In any multicultural text, the way in which lifestyles and dialogue are presented is always important. The first question asked by the guide in regard to lifestyle presentations is whether "[n]ative cultures [are] presented in a condescending manner" or if there is an appreciation for "the sophistication and complexity of their societies" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 13). Meyer seems to demonstrate a respect for the Quileutes through Bella. When she is invited to the bonfire, she leaves in awe of the tribe. She tells Jacob, "[T]hanks for inviting me tonight. That was. . . .Wow. That was something else" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 261). Another important question to consider is the idea of the "Vanished Indian" and whether or not Native Americans are shown in modern society (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 14). Obviously, Meyer's characters live in modern times and live modern lives. Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales also ask whether or not the Native American community has "backward or primitive connotations" or if the peoples are portrayed as "'superstitious'" (15). This is very interesting within the *Twilight* series because at first, Jacob seems to be dismissive about his people's legends. When he tells Bella the story of the Cullens and how the treaty was formed, he asks her, "So do you think we're a bunch of superstitious

natives or what" (Meyer, *Twilight* 126). When his father expresses anger and fear at seeing Edward and Bella together, Jacob calls him a "Superstitious old man" (Meyer, *Twilight* 239). Debbie Reese has a problem with Jacob saying things like this. She says, "A Native laughing about violating a treaty. Possible, but not likely. Particularly unlikely for a reservation-raised Native. There's always an exception to every generalization, but I doubt that an actual Quileute teen would say the things that Jacob does" ("Meyer's *Twilight*"). Reese is probably right and Jacob learns how very wrong he is when he realizes that the legends of his people are true. When discussing imprinting, Jacob says, "It's another one of those legend things. I wonder when we're going to stop being surprised that they're *all* true" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 174). Thus, Jacob realizes how wrong he was when disbelieving the legends that his tribe takes so seriously and because of that, the series demonstrates that the Quileute's beliefs are not silly or "superstitious." Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales also ask if the text has "an ethnocentric Western focus on material objects, such as baskets, pottery, [or] rugs . . . or does the writer show any understanding of the relationship between material and non-material aspects of life" (16). The only time anything like this comes up is when Jacob carves a wooden wolf for Bella's graduation. It is "carved out of some red-brown wood that matched the color of his skin" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 374). In their book on the Quileutes, Powell and Jensen write, "Among the most characteristic examples of Quileute craft were those artifacts made from red cedar" (19). So the wolf carving is an accurate craft of the Quileute people and the wolf represents the person that gave it. Therefore, there is a demonstration of how the material and non-material balance each other. The last question in regards to lifestyle presentations is, "Are Native peoples shown as 'relentlessly ecological'? Or are Native societies described as coexisting with nature in a delicate balance" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 17). One ecological concern for many people is "the wasting of finite resources," as

Edward says (Meyer, *Twilight* 83). Billy's father sells Bella's father an old truck for her to drive. The 1953 Chevy's "engine started quickly, . . .but loudly roaring to life and then idling at top volume" (Meyer, *Twilight* 12). So a truck this old is bound to be hard on gas and not so environmentally friendly. However, Billy drove it for years and so he doesn't quite fit the stereotype epitomized by the well known "Crying Indian Commercial." The Quileutes' thoughts about natural elements is never really mentioned other than the wolves' familiarity with the woods (but of course they would have different senses as wolves and would be able to take in things much differently than when in human form). When it comes to dialogue, Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales ask if "the People speak in either a sort of 'early jawbreaker' or in the oratorical style of the 'noble savage'? Or do they People use language with the consummate and articulate skill of those who come from an oral tradition" (18). In the series, never do any Native American characters speak any differently than Bella or the vampires. However, they do speak like a peoples that descended from oral tradition. When Billy tells the story at the bonfire Bella comments, "Never before had I recognized the ring of majesty that was in Billy Black's voice, though I realized now that this authority had always been there" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 244). So when Bella hears Billy speak in the context of telling his tribe's stories, she hears the storyteller that he essentially is. Meyer has really tried to make the presentation of the Quileutes respectful and some-what authentic considering her novels are composed of fantasy and the supernatural. Neither the lifestyles shown nor the dialogue of the characters hints at any underlying negativity as far as her Quileute characters are concerned.

Standards of success, as addressed by the guide, are ways in which Native Americans are portrayed as successful in life. Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales ask of texts whether or not Native Americans are "portrayed as childlike and helpless" or if "Native adults [are] seen as mature

individuals who work hard and make sacrifices in order to take care of their families, and for the well-being of the people" (19). They also question if the author makes it seem if Native children are "'better off' away from their families" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 19). Billy and the other adults at La Push are never seen as ignorant, simplistic, or as bad parents. Before knowing the Quileute change to wolves, Bella expresses concern about Sam Uley starting a gang to her father. Charlie asks, "Did you talk to Billy about this?" Bella replies, "Billy's not concerned." Charlie then responds, "Well, Bella, then I'm sure it's okay. Let Billy take care of Jacob" (Meyer, *New Moon* 257). Thus, Charlie, the white Chief of Police at Forks, not only believes Billy knows best, but that his judgment is also sound. And he is right. Jacob is not shown as "childlike or helpless" either. He tells Bella in *New Moon*, "We'll take care of you – and Charlie, too" (Meyer, *New Moon* 317). When hunters are combing the woods for giant wolves Jacob tells Bella, "We can take care of ourselves" (Meyer, *New Moon* 305). Neither the wolves nor the other Quileute members are ever portrayed as being reliant on someone else for help.

Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales ask whether or not "Native people and their communities contrast unfavorably with the 'norm' of white middle-class suburbia? Or are [they] and their communities seen as their own cultural norm" (20). Obviously, a community that has members that transition into wolves can only be seen as having "their own cultural norm." This is especially the case because the fact that they do turn into wolves is praised by teenagers all over the world, rather than seen as a dangerous threat to the white community. There is a scene in *Eclipse* when Jacob pulls up to Bella's school on his motorcycle. Bella recognizes the racism other students display. She says, "With a sense of astonishment, I realized that Jacob looked *dangerous* to them. How odd" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 77). Bella is shocked that students would display fear of Jacob because she knows him so well. It's hard to determine whether or not Jacob goes

against the "cultural norm" when most of the main characters in the book do. Bella can't walk without tripping over herself, she hangs out with vegetarian vampires, and even her own father is so obtuse that he doesn't wonder why Edward never eats or hasn't had a birthday. The only people that seem to follow any sort of normal behaviors are Bella's classmates at school, and Bella certainly doesn't envy their seemingly boring lives. When Jacob tells her she ought to look for partners within her own species, she says, "Well, that just sucks!" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 110). Regardless, Jacob's size is what Bella concentrates on and the reason she thinks students fear him, not solely because he is Native American. Later in class she hears someone say, "My money's on the big Indian," which is really the most blatantly disrespectful language used toward or about any of the Quileute characters. Mike then adds, "Did you see the *size* of that Jacob kid" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 90). Whether or not it was his size or his race, Bella is so dismissive about her fellow classmates and their seemingly normal yet boring lives that the reader might be left with the same annoyance with them. Similarly, Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales ask if Native characters need "'white' standards . . . to get ahead" or if "Native values of cooperation, generosity, sharing, honestly, and courage [are] seen as integral to growth and development" (21). Jacob is very confused as to why Bella would choose Edward, and for good reason. McClimans and Wisnewsji admit in their essay, "Undead Patriarchy and the Possibility of Love," that Jacob recognizes how controlling Edward can be (165). So he confronts Bella directly about her choices. One concern he has is if Bella is picking Edward because of his looks or because he has money – arguably the two whitest standards of success (Meyer, *Eclipse* 110). Bella responds, "I'm flattered that you think so much of me" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 110). Jacob's family values community and kinship over any material wealth. Housel says, "Jacob is grounded in humility and lives a life of moderation, he is more satisfied with life in general" ("The Tao"

239). Even though Edward has unlimited wealth, he is constantly depressed and pessimistic. Bella must frequently lift him up whereas Jacob lifts Bella up. That is one reason she constantly refers to him as her "sun." Likewise, Bella is often happy when spending time at the reservation because of the close community of kinship found there. In the scene when she and her father eat spaghetti at the Blacks' home, everyone has to eat outside because the inside of the house is too small for all the people. Bella doesn't care because like Jacob and his family, she values the sense of togetherness the tribe has. Bella says:

> The men talked about the game, and Harry and Charlie made fishing plans. Sue teased her husband about his cholesterol and tried, unsuccessfully, to shame him into eating something green and leafy. . . . It was loud and sometimes confusing as everyone talked over everyone else, and the laughter from one joke interrupted the telling of another. . . . I didn't want to leave. (Meyer, *New Moon* 150)

So in a world where money rules and family is often forgotten, the Quileutes consider themselves successful because they are good people who have close bonds.

The role of women and elders is another distinction between quality Native American texts and poor ones. When it comes to female characters, it is important to determine if they are "completely subservient to men . . . or are women portrayed as the integral and respected part of Native societies that they really are" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 22). As mentioned previously, when it comes to women, Meyer's Quileutes consider them equal partners in life. The story of "The Third Wife's Sacrifice" demonstrates the reverence the tribe has for what the woman did to save her tribe. Bella describes The Third Wife as "Just a human woman, with no special gifts or powers. Physically weaker and slower than any of the monsters in the story. But she had been the key, the solution. She'd saved her husband. Her young sons, her tribe" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 260).

And the fact that Leah Clearwater turns into a wolf and that her mother, Sue, takes her husband's place on the council is evidence that the Quileute see women as their equal and not an inferior. Also, those two women show how "integral and respected" the women are within the tribe. Elders, who are also often seen as inferior and even burdens in Western societies, are also revered in the series. Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales say that elders should not be "treated as a dispensable burden upon their people," but rather should be "treated as loved and valued custodians of a People's history, culture, and lifeways" (23). Rather than still having a chief, the Quileutes in the book have a council of tribal elders. These are the people that essentially oversee the laws and practices of the tribe, as well as those that pass along the histories and stories of the tribe. If the elders were considered a burden, the tribe would probably resort back to having a chief or younger council to oversee the tribe. Jacob also knows that as a son, he will care for his father with the respect his father deserves. Being in a wheelchair also means that Billy needs a little more help than most people his age. In a conversation in *Breaking Dawn*, Jacob and Billy joke around about Jacob's care. When Jacob comments that Billy will ruin his chair because of the way he travels everywhere on the reservation by himself Jacob says, "And then you'll be dragging yourself around by your elbows" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 165). Billy replies, "Not a chance. It'll be your job to carry me." Jacob says, "You won't be going many places" (Meyer, *Breaking Dawn* 165). But the tone is completely humorous and Jacob knows that he would do whatever he had to in order to help his father; he has already been taking care of him for years. He has been raised to realize that the elders hold an important place within society and tradition. This is seen during the story at the bonfire because while Billy tells the story, Emily writes everything down because the tribe knows that the elders are the very keepers of their histories. Bella says, "Emily produced a spiral-bound notebook and a pen, looking exactly like a student

set for an important lecture" (Meyer, *Eclipse* 243). And even though Emily is recording this story, there are many that Billy will tell the tribe over his lifetime. In the *Twilight* series, the Quileute demonstrate an immense respect for both women and elders; they know that both are important element within their society.

How the text affects Native American children and the author's background are two of the most important aspects of determining whether or not a book is a positive choice for young readers. Whenever a book contains multicultural characters, it is important to note how that representation affects the culture that the book portrays. Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales say the same is true for children: "Is there anything in the story that would embarrass or hurt a Native child? Or are there one or more positive role models with which a Native child can identify" (24). Everyone is different and it can safely be assumed that some people experience and feel differently about things than others. But there are so many Native American characters in the series that certainly Native American children would have positive examples to relate to. Even the wolves are so different that there must be one that any person could relate to. Some boys or girls might appreciate Sam's maturity, Paul's pride, Seth's bravery, or even Jacob's sense of humor. And likewise some young children may find that they identify with the kind, romantic Emily or they may relate more to the headstrong, independent Leah. Chaske Spencer, the Lakota actor who plays Sam in the movie versions, didn't feel ashamed or embarrassed of his role and when it comes to the *Twilight* series, "It felt good to be proud of his heritage" (Webb). Besides self-image, it is important to consider where the author is coming from. Authenticity versus creative freedom is a battle that writers have been fighting for years. In "Judging Authors by the Color of Their Skin? Quality Native American Children's Literature," Stewart says that "Many children's literature critics agree that books written by non-natives are not necessarily bad"

(185). However, other critics believe one can only write about the inside from the inside. One question posed by the guide is whether or not there is "anything in the author's and illustrator's background that qualifies them to write about Native Peoples" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 25). They also ask if authors' backgrounds "enable them to write about Native peoples in an accurate, respectful manner" (Slapin, Seale, and Gonzales 25). Stephenie Meyer is not Native American. However, as a sort of minority herself (Mormon), the authority from which she writes stems from her religious beliefs which Megan Irwin writes about in her essay, "Charmed":

> Growing up, Meyer's favorite Book of Mormon story was the one about the 2,000 stripling warriors, from the book of Alma. In the story, the parents of a small group of boys are under attack but have taken a blood oath never to fight again after their conversion to Christianity. They consider breaking the oath but are persuaded not to by a prophet. Their sons, who never took the oath, go to fight instead and because of their faith, not a single one is harmed. Meyer sees her werewolves as her stripling warriors. (Irwin 28)

Meyer also addresses this claim. She says, "In the history of the Book of Mormon, they [the warriors] would have been dark-skinned, the ancestors of the Native Americans who are here now. So for me, the Quileute are kind of these sons who have taken on the responsibility of taking care of their families" (Irwin 28). For Meyer, the Quileutes symbolize important figures from her faith and sacred religious text. So if some critics are correct in saying that non-Native can write about Native Americans with care, then it seems reasonable that Meyer would try to do so with as much positivity and respect as possible because of the connection she sees between Native Americans and her religious beliefs.

There is a lot more to selecting quality multicultural work than just making sure stereotypes are challenged, although that is certainly a major consideration. And, poorly written characters can further racial divides by misinforming readers. Naomi Caldwell-Wood and Lisa A. Mitten say that "For the most part, [c]riticism is directed at fiction where the greatest stereotypes and wildest imaginings about Indians still hold sway" in their article "'I' Is Not for Indian: The Portrayal of Native Americans in Books for Young People" (26). Even though the series is still new, it seems that critics are not too fond of it. However, Meyer not only steers clear of stereotypes of Native Americans throughout her series, but she also creates a positive, fairly accurate portrayal of Native American characters considering that this series is fiction and fantasy. By not only studying stereotypes and Meyer's lack thereof, by looking at the *How to Tell the Difference: A Guide for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias* by Doris Seale, Beverly Slapin and Rosemary Gonzales it becomes clear that Meyer has also attempted to create characters that offer readers a positive and unbiased representation. In her paper, "'I' Still Isn't for Indian" Nina Lindsay comments on the fact that there are just not "enough good books about Native Americans" (42). That may be true, but at least Meyer's series has certainly reminded millions of avid readers that Native Americans still exist! Chaske Spencer says that when it comes to reminding readers about the existence of modern, non-stereotypical Native Americans, "It takes something like this" (Murray). While maybe not its intent, *Twilight* forces readers to consider Native Americans within a context other than Thanksgiving or the Wild Frontier. And by doing so, readers become more interested in the real tribal histories and current issues facing many Native American tribes today.

CONCLUSION: WHY *TWILIGHT* REALLY MATTERS

The *Twilight* series should certainly be commended for some of its contributions to young adult literature featuring Native American characters. Besides complex Quileute portrayals, the series also offers a few insightful ideas of the duality of all people as well as their many commonalities. However, the series falls short in at least one major way. The lack of a true historical context of colonization for the Quileute is one of the books' biggest weaknesses. Even so, there is a larger reason for analyzing the role the Quileutes play in this series because the saga could affect future progress for and awareness of the Quileute tribe.

The differences and commonalities between the Quileutes and the vampires really point out basic characteristics of all human beings, rather than separating these two groups into entirely unrealistic mythical beings. According to Leggatt and Burnett, "Vampires symbolize the many historical and contemporary social and economic problems that arose in Native communities as a result of colonization, and the shape-shifting Quileute try to protect their people from those problems" (31). There is certainly enough textual evidence to support this. The vampires move into areas that they have no claim on, and they gain control over the area by being at the "top of the food-chain." The Quileute tribe has to adapt the way they live (even in physical form) just to maintain some ownership over the land they have resided on since their beginnings. But there are certain characteristics that both groups have in common. While the Quileute are portrayed as a peaceful people, they have the ability of violence which is evident by Emily's scars. The Cullens, while created with the desire to overpower and destroy, repeatedly fight what they are so that they will be no threat to other human beings. In reality, whether people are born with a predisposition for good or evil, we are all capable of both. The two parties also demonstrate how dangerous people can be when they give in to instinctual urges. Leggatt

and Burnett also observe this: “Where Edward constantly maintains control in the relationship and puts limits n the sexual contact that Bella wants, Jacob twice forces himself on Bella, first through his physical strength, and then through trickery” (36). Thus, Edward’s instinct is to deny the woman any power over his feelings, and Jacob’s is to exert his own sense of power on her. What these examples show in context to all real people is that human beings must control instinctual urges with caution because they are not always beneficial to others. The fact is that all people have both “noble” and “savage” sides. In the *Twilight* saga there are both good and evil present in every character, and without that duality of nature, Meyer would have presented one-dimensional characters that lacked enough reality to be believable to readers. Leggatt and Burnett add that “Meyer repeatedly casts the werewolves and vampires as polar opposites. Most obviously, where vampires are literally cold, werewolves are hot” (35). But most importantly, is that those that are hot are capable of cold and those that are cold are capable of being hot. The characters are not confined to staying on their side of the thermometer, so to speak; they are, in fact, most often lukewarm, just as we all are.

Even though critics like Leggatt and Burnett see Edward symbolizing the colonizer, Meyer’s novels really fall short when it comes to providing readers with a genuine historical context of the Quileutes. Leggatt and Burnett say that in this series, “Bella represents the land, Jacob embodies the Quileute people, and Edward Cullen stands in for the newcomers” (27). Whether that’s true or not, and one can certainly hope that the female heroine does not represent the land for which two men are competing to control, the Quileute tribe has a rich cultural heritage that Meyer has simply ignored. In their book *Quileute: An Introduction to the Indians of La Push*, Jay Powell and Vickie Jensen agree with Leggatt and Burnett that treaties have played an important role in Quileute history. One of those treaties took place in 1855 which demanded

the Quileute "give up their land and move to a reservation" (39). The reservation move wasn't really enforced until 1889 when "an executive order of President Grover Cleveland set up a one-mile-square reservation at La Push" (39). Bella, nor any character in the series, ever wonders how or why Jacob's tribe is forced to live outside mainstream society and on a reservation. This is in an important omission on Meyer's part. There are certain aspects of Quileute history that would have synched perfectly within Meyer's narrative. For example, "In 1882, 'civilization' reached the Quileutes in force when A.W. Smith established a school and set about providing Quileutes with names from the Bible (Esau, Levi, Sarah), American history (William Penn, Henry Hudson, Andrew Jackson), or anglicized versions of Quileutes names (Buckety Mason, California Hobucket, Leven P. Coe)" (41). And this could include names like Jacob or Billy. Another interesting bit of Quileute history that would have made a wonderful addition to Meyer's books is that "in 1864, James G. Swan was sent to Neah Bay as physician and teacher and, even though the Quileutes refused to attend his school, Swan later published a description of Quileute surf smelt-fishing techniques" (Powell and Jensen 45). It is clear the Quileutes were a very resilient people who tried to resist colonization and that kind of heroic information would only strengthen Meyer's characters. Also, James G. Swan could have fictionally been related to Charlie and Bella Swan, and thus demonstrated the mutually respectful relationship Charlie and Bella have for Jacob and his tribe. Without this sort of historical context, Meyer's characters are almost entirely fantasy. Even with the supernatural elements in her stories, the Quileutes could have been more solidified with proper historical context. And, this would have been an excellent opportunity for Meyer to educate her readers about a tribe that had little to no media attention.

Even without the historical context, this series still has amazing potential to provide the Quileute with a positive means to gain national attention for issues regarding all Native peoples.

There are still many misconceptions concerning Native Americans in the United States today. Some people still insist Indians live in tipis and dress in regalia everyday. Others think they still speak in broken English and use expressions like "How" because that's what mainstream media has taught us. The youth are the people that will grow to make changes in the world and the time when they are young and impressionable is perhaps the most important time to challenge conventional thinking. And perhaps the best thing the *Twilight* series does is present realistic modern-day Native American characters in the context of their current life on a reservation. How every reader will respond to the series is not predictable. But certainly there will be some whose mistaken beliefs of Native Americans are challenged. I am a good example of one. I read the first two books in 2007, during my final semester of undergraduate work. The only experience I had ever had with Native Americans is that my parents would take me to Cherokee when I was little to go camping and to pose with the "Chief" for pictures. While in Cherokee, I bought a set of small plastic "cowboys and Indians." The set came with canoes, tomahawks, and tipis for the Indians and horses and guns for the cowboys. I still have it to this day. I loved those figurines. The Indians would come out with their tomahawks raised, but I made sure the cowboys always saved the day by beating the Indians. Other than basic U.S. history classes in school about the good Indians who helped the white man plant corn and the bad Indians who scalped women without flinching, I never had any genuine interactions with any Native Americans and I never thought about it. Then I picked up Meyer's first two books and I was shocked. The Quileutes didn't wear feathers, they lived in houses, and they were even funny. Reading the books led me to start doing research on various tribes. I eventually went to graduate school and quickly signed up for a class on Native American literature. Now, the representation of Native Americans has become the focus of my thesis, and I am the teacher representative for my county's Indian-

Education Parent Committee, which works to ensure all Native American persons get equal unbiased education that aims to increase the Native American graduation rate in the county. I have even since discovered that I had two great-great-grandmothers who were part of the Cherokee Nation. All it takes to make a difference in something is to get enough attention that people will start to care. And with the current issues facing Native American peoples, such as depression, poverty, and limited means of coping with both, books like *Twilight*, while not perfect, do remind readers that Native Americans are still here and are very real people who are not the stereotypes thy have been portrayed as. The series has already brought much interest to the Quileute nation. Besides bringing a lot of tourist money to the reservation, Renee Rux, the director at the tribal Oceanside Resort, says that, "People [now] want that experience of being with the Quileute" (Yim). That kind of attention for the tribe cannot be ignored and even on the Quileute Nation's website, quileutenation.org, the tribe features *Twilight* news and even offers actual Quileute stories and legends. Like it or not, Tribal Chairwoman Anna Rose Counsell-Geyer cleverly admits that *Twilight* "is going to be imprinted on people's lives for generations to come" (Valdes). And thus, so will the Quileute people.

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